

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Over the years it has been observed that more Chinese people from mainland China, specifically young adults, have left their homeland to pursue tertiary studies overseas. Since the relationship between China and Malaysia has become closer, a growing number of Chinese have chosen to pursue their tertiary studies in the universities of Malaysia. Malaysia is a multi-cultural country where English is the official language that is used in many formal situations, including academic purposes. Therefore, Chinese students use English during their academic years in Malaysia.

Studies in recent years have shown more interest at looking at the Chinese speakers of English internationally. One of the concerns in some of these studies is how these Chinese speakers use English for their studies abroad. Among the many speech events, group interaction is commonly used in various contexts such as group discussions, team work interaction and project proposals when these speakers are in higher educational institutions overseas. For this study, the context that will be explored is in the environment of tertiary level education. In such contexts these Chinese speakers of English are required to participate effectively in group discussions using English as the main language of communication.

Being non-native speakers of English, the use of English in interactions pose a challenge to many of them because in their home country, they learn English by memorizing rules (Yang, 2011:61) and sitting for standard tests which are often individually assessed (Du, 2012:3). This indicates that the Chinese did not have much experience in doing group work in their previous school times.

Furthermore, interaction is a culture-governed behavior. Different interactional patterns in certain speech events reflect the differing interaction rules between different cultures. Thus, achieving effective and efficient communication differs from context to context and specifically culture is one significant factor in determining this. Reversibly, this could also imply that non-native speakers of English from China display speaking styles in group interaction that may or may not be acceptable in English-speaking cultures. The nature of the Chinese culture and the influence of its native language (that is Mandarin) often creates obstacles towards effective communication in a cross cultural context (Gao, 2000; Fang & Faure, 2011).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

This study is motivated by an interest in examining how Chinese speakers in a tertiary environment interact in groups. There are two reasons for this. As mentioned, Chinese young adults seldom do any group discussion in their early age. So when they pursue their tertiary studies abroad, they face a whole new educational system where interpersonal skill enhancement is one of the most important educational objectives. Some researchers have commented that the Chinese students have problems with activities such as group discussions (Li & Nesi, 2004; Cheng, 2000). In addition, they have to use English in carrying these study programs.

On the other hand, previous studies have been done on Japanese and American speakers (Watanabe, 1993; Long, 2012) as well as Thai speakers (Morrow & Jungsatitkul, 2010) in group interactions. These researches compared the notable different discourse features of group discussion by English speakers of the three cultural groups. On the Chinese, previous researches have focused on explaining the influence of its culture on the speakers' communication behavior in English learning (Abu Baker, 2008; Xu, 2008). Only few

researches (e.g. Li & Nesi, 2004) are done on the patterns of Chinese and English interactions in small-group discussions.

Researchers concentrated on finding out the relationship between Chinese culture and Chinese's weaknesses in spoken English so that they can seek a more effective way to improve the Chinese learners' oral skills. But how the Chinese speakers actually interact in English remain unclear.

### **1.3 Research Purpose**

For these reasons, the general aim of this study is to identify, analyze and describe the discourse features in group interactions among Chinese speakers of English in a tertiary environment. To capture the naturally occurring speech of the Chinese speakers of English, this study will explore the spoken discourse features of the openings and closings in group interactions. The task given for discussion is based on current topics that are relevant to the Chinese speakers of English today.

Particularly, in order to see whether the talks produced by the Chinese speakers reflect the characteristics of Chinese Culture, this study explores the impact of the Chinese cultural values on the Chinese speakers' interactional patterns in group interactions. At the same time, the study also compares the similarities and differences in the interactional behaviors of male and female Chinese speakers.

Besides, the study on gender issues in language use allowed the data obtained in this study to look into the significant differences and similarities present in naturally-occurring speech or discourse of Chinese young men and women. It also seeks to gain insights into how they behave linguistically when interacting with the same- or opposite-gender group members. However, it is noted that the study will not attempt to compare the interpretations of gendered discourse features in the other studies which are conducted in the context of the other cultures.

## **1.4 Overview of the research**

This study investigates whether the influence of Chinese culture on the interaction of Chinese speakers of English is evident in group discussions. It addresses the topic in three research questions, from an overview of the pragmatic features to in-depth analysis. Analysis on the influence of culture on the discourse produced by the Chinese speakers will be based on some Chinese cultural values (see Chapter two). Further, gender differences and similarities in interaction will also be identified and described to answer the third research question. This study is related to culture and gender issues using discourse analysis as an approach, and it is hoped that by doing so, a better picture of how these non-native speakers of English (the participants) carry out their interaction in English will be provided.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

To achieve the research purpose, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the discourse features of opening and closing sequences conducted by Chinese speakers of English in their group interactions?
2. How are Asian core cultural values reflected in Chinese English speakers' speech in the opening and closing sequences?
3. What are the similarities and differences in the discourse features used by male and female speakers in the group interactions?

In relation to the interactional patterns, the first question will particularly focus on the description of opening and closing stages in the spoken discourses of group interaction. The second research question would answer how Chinese cultural values impact the Chinese speakers in their interactional patterns. The areas that male and female Chinese speakers of English show differences and similarities will be answered in the third research question.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study covers the field of discourse analysis specifically in a Chinese cultural context. It is important in three aspects. Firstly, by demonstrating the discourse features of group interaction, this study hopes to provide some insights into the communication style, specifically in relation to the interactional patterns of Chinese speakers of English in a tertiary environment. Besides, the linguistic features associated with cultural issues will also be explored to provide a better understanding of the way they communicate. A positive value of this study is that it helps raise the awareness of how Chinese speakers interact in groups to get their message across in English and secondly, how Chinese young adults perform in group interaction.

## **1.7 Summary**

This chapter describes the background of the research undertaken to explore the discourse of group interaction by Chinese speakers of English. The features that are found through description of the pragmatic features allow the researcher to review whether the Chinese speakers still model their traditional and cultural values in speaking English. It has provided the rationale for the reason of what actually happens when Chinese who are non-native speakers of English work in groups at tertiary levels. A close look at the interactional style of males and females also contribute to the discussion on how gender differences affect the style.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the literature related to this study which looks at how Chinese speakers (from China) of English interact in groups, with specific focus on the interactional patterns via discourse features employed in discussions. Further, how these speakers reflect their culture in the talk will also be examined and a final section will focus on the differences of these discourse features between male and female speakers. Before describing the various perspectives employed in this study, a brief description on group interaction is provided below.

#### **2.2 Group Interaction**

The interaction behaviour of speakers will differ depending on the contexts of talk. Group interactions, both in formal or informal settings, are basically one which involves information sharing, decision making, and outcome achieving (Gatica-perez, 2006). It is a speech event which involves at least two or more speakers engaged in some form of talk. According to Jamaliah Mohd Ali (2000), the structure of such interaction is a “fairly loose one without any clear hierarchical structures” (p.199). It can be spontaneous and allows for easy going flow of ideas, sharing of new information and exchange of opinions.

In most contexts of talk, speech is spontaneous and involves at times more than two persons (multiparty talk); and in such cases, there are bound to be overlapped, and interrupted. The sequential structure (Li & Nesi, 2004) is evident in such forms of talk, where there are turn taking, adjacency pairs and repair happening at the same time. Hence, there is no homogeneous pattern for the group interactions. And the characteristics of such interactions

also depend on what is being discussed. Discussions are rich and dynamic and hence the talk can be transcribed for a study that aims to look at the interactional patterns of Chinese speakers of English. Various studies have been carried out over the years and the next section will provide some explanation of them.

### **2.2.1 Studies on Group Interactions**

Watanabe (1993)'s study made a comparison on Japanese and American English speakers in group discussions in a school setting. These four groups of American and three groups of Japanese were asked to discuss three topics without a limitation on their language used in the discussion. So the Japanese did not use English in their interaction. It is found that there are differences in the way Japanese and American opened and closed their interaction, as well as differences in turn-taking, turn-length, in topic shift, and in stance taking. For instance, the difference in turn-length is, Japanese take longer turns than the American to state their own opinion. Thus on stance taking, the Americans present their position per turn. Yet the Japanese are particularly concerned about the concept 'face' so that they take extended turns to make their position clear. These different group discussion features are explained due to the impact of the cultural values.

As for studies on the exchange patterns in small-group discussions, Li & Nesi (2004) explored the differences between the behaviour of Chinese and English participants. They examined the differences and similarities in group discussions of these two cultural groups by analysing turn-length, turn complexity, turn function and the exchange initiation using the IRF (Initiation Respond and Feedback) theory. This is an experimental study with three Chinese native speakers and three English native speakers and they were grouped into two intra-cultural groups. Participants were asked to discuss two topics in their mother tongue. It is found that these two groups differ in turn length as well. Chinese discussion consists of

longer turns, use more turns for supporting or an argument (which is similar to Watanabe's finding). This study found something mismatch the expectation, that is the Chinese-only group is more competitive atmosphere and the female participants dominate the discussion although they are at equal status.

In another study, Morrow & Jungsatitkul (2010) investigated the use of English by Thai university students in group interaction. They compared the findings with that of Watanabe's study. And the conclusion of it is that Thai speakers of English exhibit similar discourse features with Japanese speakers because of their similar cultural values. However, Thai speakers of English have different ways of opening and closing discussion, used different stance taking strategies, and had differing organizational structure in their discussion. In this case, cultural influence on interactional behaviour plays a significant role. There is therefore an assumption that non-native speakers of English who use English in interactions are not necessarily impacted by their first language and cultural values. In groups, each individual chooses his or her own way to interpret events and communicate correspondingly, which a cognitive activity known as "frame" (Gresser, 2005).

### **2.2.2 'Frame'**

The multiple meanings of the word "frame" in this context refer to a set of the values, expectation, and beliefs associated with specific speech events (Hymes, 1972 in Long 2012:250). In other words, people have their own expectations about speakers, settings, and the way language is used in certain speech events. Based on this frame theory, Watanabe (1993)'s study found that Japanese and American speakers are very different in the way they start and end discussion, in topic shift, turn-taking and stance-taking. It was concluded that these differences are raised by different cultural values.



“Frame” is a bridging concept between communication and culture (Gorp, 2007:61). Culture refers to a set of beliefs, agreement, norms, values and frames that are shared by a group or communication. Moreover, Goffman (1981, cited in Gorp, 2007) considers frame as a central part of a culture, that is, “frame” locates in the communication process. It signals what individuals say and guides the hearers’ interpretation of the message. The ways to interact may vary from culture to culture, and each may have their own expectations on how to interact. However, the conceptualization of “frame” is more suitable when applied in cross-cultural communication contexts because it explains the reasons for different interpretations of the same events.

It is noticed that conversation analysis is widely applied in the researches (Ali, 2000; Morrow & Jungsatitkul, 2010; Watanabe 1993) on interactional patterns of group interactions. There will be an introduction to conversation analysis in the following section.

### **2.3 Conversation Analysis**

Conversation Analysis (henceforth CA) is widely used in the studies which involve the descriptions of spoken interaction in the context of small groups (Ali, 2000; Walsh et al., 2011; Gatica-Perez, 2006; Morrow & Jungsatitkul, 2010). CA features include of turn-taking, the turn-constructive units like interruptions and overlaps as well as the sequential organization, and these features have been examined by many researchers on talk in interaction.

In the current study, in order to understand the process of an interaction, the starting point is to describe the patterns of interaction between Chinese English speakers who have been asked to discuss given topics in groups. The analytical approach used is CA because the focus is on the talk the speakers do in groups. CA aids in this analysis of spoken discourse as it looks at the way in which people manage their interactions (Paltridge, 2006). In this study,

CA is used to understand the interlocutors' utterances and make sense of the group interaction. CA concerns the aspects of spoken discourse such as turn-taking, adjacency pairs, overlap, interruption, and sequential structure.

### **2.3.1 Turn-taking**

Turn-taking is one of the fundamental organizations in conversations. Turn-taking exists in the conversation as a means to have an ongoing conversation. The system for turn-taking described by Goodwin & Heritage (1990) includes three components:

1. is a basic form of organization that provides places for possible turn-transition;
2. selection of speaker, which includes both speakers self-selection and the current speaker appoints the next speaker;
3. is applicable to any conversation provides options for action at possible change-of-turn place.

Turn-taking in discussion is obvious and participants interact with each other by taking turns to talk. Overall, the turn-taking systems of the three group discussions are not ordered. According to Sacks (1974), the basic rule in conversation is that each one takes turns to talk, after which they may nominate another speaker or another speaker may take up the turn without being nominated. It is because the speaker has the floor at that moment of the utterance. Turns are constructed of 'unit types' which can consist of words, phrases or clauses. It is also clear that turn length is not fixed, but varies (Liddicoat, 2011). Sometimes a turn can be a single word, at other times it may be quite a long sentence.

### **2.3.2 Overlap**

Each speaker in the conversation takes turns to speak. The fundamental principle is that no more than one person speaks at any one time. In conversation it appears that when more than one person is speaking at the same time, which may happen, and then an overlap occurs

(Heritage, 1995). So overlap refers to the next speaker taking up a speaking turn even before the current speaker finishes. When overlap happens, it normally signals the presence of one of these emotions: annoyance, urgency or it could be a remedial effort made by the speaker who takes the turn of talk without waiting for the current speaker to complete his turn. However, overlapping does not totally violate the principle of rotation (e.g. Zimmermann & West, 1983; Tannen, 1990; Cerny, 2010).

### **2.3.3 Interruption**

Interruption in contrast with overlapping is a violation of the turn-taking rules of conversation. The next speaker stops the current speaker from finishing his/her speech. Tannen (1990) distinguished overlapping and interruption in this way: an overlap is when speakers' intention show support that can keep the conversation going; an interruption is when a speaker tries to take the floor which means a disruption to the other's turn. It is a violation but also the speaker's do have the right to interrupt in the interaction. However some linguists state that interruption involves some sort of overlapping (Wynn, 1995). It occurs when the previous speaker is speaking and he/she is not about to finish, but the next speaker begins to talk and interrupts the previous speaker. An interruption usually prevents the previous speaker from finishing his/her turn and at the same time the interrupter gains a turn to speak. The main difference between an overlap and an interruption is that interruption results in a break of the speech flow, while an overlap need not cause the utterance of the previous speaker to end (Zimmermann & West, 1983).

In brief, CA is regarded as a useful analytical tool for examining discourse features in spoken interaction, especially when many researchers have formulated the transcription conventions which can be easily used to make spoken data appear in written form.

## 2.4 Hofstede's Cultural Model

Cultural study is a wide field, encompassing many approaches, and perspectives differ from research to research. During the last two decades, studies relevant to cultural aspects have been initiated from the English-speaking world researchers, such as Hall (1990)'s theory of high/low context cultures, and Hofstede (2011)'s cultural dimensions. It is not easy to state which cultural model is a more appropriate one for research. But it appears that Hofstede's conceptualization of culture is highly prevalent and most cited by researchers in this field.

Until 1980s, Hofstede had formed five dimensions of national culture that distinguishes each country. In the 2000s, an addition of a sixth dimension is calculated with findings from the research of scholar Michael Minkov (Hofstede, 2011:7). The six dimensions are labelled as below:

1. *Power Distance*, related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality;
2. *Uncertainty Avoidance*, related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future;
3. *Individualism versus Collectivism*, related to the integration of individuals into primary groups;
4. *Masculinity versus Femininity*, related to the division of emotional roles between women and men;
5. *Long Term versus Short Term Orientation* related to the choice of focus for people's efforts: the future or the present and past.
6. *Indulgence versus Restraint*, related to the gratification versus control of basic human desires related to enjoying life.

(Hofstede, 2011:8)

Hofstede's dimension of individualism and collectivism will be considered in this study. Individualism refers to focus on one's own needs, interests, and achievement that make one prominent. Hence, individuals tend to be focus on reaching personal goals rather than

establishing relationships with the others. On the contrary, collectivism tends to focus on “we”. This “we” mentality dominates and the relationship with the others is regarded as important. There are ten different characteristics on these two orientations of societies (Hofstede, 2011:7) and they are listed in the table below.

Table 2.1 Characteristics of Individualism and Collectivism

Individualism	Collectivism
Everyone is supposed to take care of him or herself and his or her immediate family only	People are born into extended families or clans which protect them in exchange for loyalty
‘I’ –consciousness	‘We’-consciousness
Right of privacy	Stress on belonging
Speaking one’s mind is healthy	Harmony should always be maintained
Others classified as individuals	Others Classified as in-group or out-group
Personal opinion expected: one person one vote	Opinions and votes predetermined by in-group
Transgression of norms leads to guilt feelings	Transgression of norms leads to shame feelings
Languages in which the word ‘I’ is indispensable	Languages in which the word ‘I’ is avoided
Purpose of education is learning how to learn	Purpose of education is learning how to do
Task prevails over relationship	Relationship prevails over task

Most developed and western countries except for Japan take a middle position in this dimension: they tend to prefer Individualism; while collectivism prevails in the eastern and less developed countries. Although China is not in the listed countries for this cultural dimension, according to the characteristics it may be assumed that China is a member of collectivism-oriented culture (Xu, 2008:83; Zhu & Zhu, 2004:211). The most outstanding characteristics are: focus on group needs at the same time maintains relational harmony and the relationship prevails over task. According to St.Amant (2007), Chinese collectivism culture encourages her people to accommodate to others’ talk.

A fundamental reason for this is the concept of the perception of “Self”: collectivism and individualism are interdependent. The collective Chinese are interdependent self that have perceived effect of one’s own actions on others or the reaction to others’ behaviour (Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2012). Relevant to the notion of in-group and out-group, individuals tend to behave in the same way with everybody whereas collectivists behave differently with in-group than those of out-group. For example, in decision-making, collectivist cultures prefer decisions made for them by someone from the important in-group people, but not from the out-group (ibid). Overall, individuals in collectivist culture are group-based, whereas individuals in the individualism culture are independent. Thus, when Chinese speakers use English for interaction, their collectivist features might also be reflected in the speech event.

## **2.5 Chinese Culture Values**

Rooted deep in Chinese history is the teaching of Confucius (St. Amant, 2007:72; Park & Kim, 2008:47; Abu Baker, 2008: 108) which has permeated Chinese society in general. The teaching emphasizes harmony and one way of creating this is through age and social hierarchy. The younger person is always expected to respect the older one, and the person who belongs to a higher status is respected by the lower ranking one. Some studies (ibid) explained that Chinese cultural values have impacted Chinese thinking patterns, communication behaviour and how the speakers use the English language in various speech situations. Hence, the fact is the oral cultural tradition of the national language (Mandarin) has many effects on the Chinese interpersonal communication (Abu Baker, 2008).

Due to the impact of Confucianism, people communicate to develop at the meantime maintain harmony within relationships (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998 in Park & Kim, 2008:47). Besides, this concept advocates that a person is part of a society, which concurs with

Hofstede's dimension of collectivism. The ways in which the Chinese interact are governed by some key factors such as face, politeness, and relationship (Zhu & Zhu, 2004:210; Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998). For example, depending on the social status, degree of intimacy, age, and gender, Chinese speakers would avoid explicit communication to protect and show respect to each other; communicate in a polite way to help maintain the relationship between people; and males usually dominate the communication.

But it is also noted that times are changing and so do the Chinese cultural values, as China keeps abreast with globalisation and rapid technological advancement (Abu Baker, 2008:112). This has also influenced the role of men and women. From Confucian principles, women are considered inferior to men. A woman in the past needs to obey her husband and son, so her way of communication should be indirect, quiet and polite. Until the establishment of People's Republic of China in 1949, together with development and prosperity, have seen women being given more freedom and they can free themselves from the "masculine" influence (Erway, 2004). It is not surprising when a woman becomes a leader of an organization. This change has also affected the way men and women use language as well.

## **2.6 Chinese Communication Style**

Communication is a process of exchanging messages, sharing information or developing and maintaining relationships between one and another (Lewis, 2008). It is acknowledged that people from two different communication cultures tend to interact in varied communication style. This study aims to describe, analyse and explain the interactional patterns of Chinese speakers of English, with focus on postgraduate students. Collectivism is the representative of Asian cultures and China is a strong collectivism-oriented culture (Xu, 2008:83, Fang & Faure 2011:321). Integrated one into relational harmony and group are prioritized over personal satisfaction and needs. But it is worthy to mention that Chinese is not collectivist the

way Japanese culture is labelled (Fang & Faure, 2011), it shows some own characteristics in the current reality of China.

Some studies on Chinese communication style have been conducted by various researchers (e.g. Fang & Faure, 2011; Gao & Ting-Toomey 1998; Xu, 2008). However, studies that provide systematic understanding of Chinese communication style are few. It is hoped that this current study is able to fill the gap in this area. There are two researches that have influences in the literature of current study. The frameworks that explain the communication style related to culture are Lewis (2008)'s cultural categories of communication and Gao (1998) and her team's research on Chinese communication.

### **2.6.1 Lewis Model of Cultural Classification**

In order to effectively understand today's multicultural world, Lewis's Model (2008) is constructed for the purpose of culture classification. The model classifies cultures into three types: Linear-active; Multi-active and Reactive, and each group has its own characteristics (Figure 2.1). It explains how the communication styles of people are reflected in their language patterns. The model was built to promote harmony in inter-cultural understanding. Hereby, in this study, this Model is used to explain the communication characteristics of different cultures.



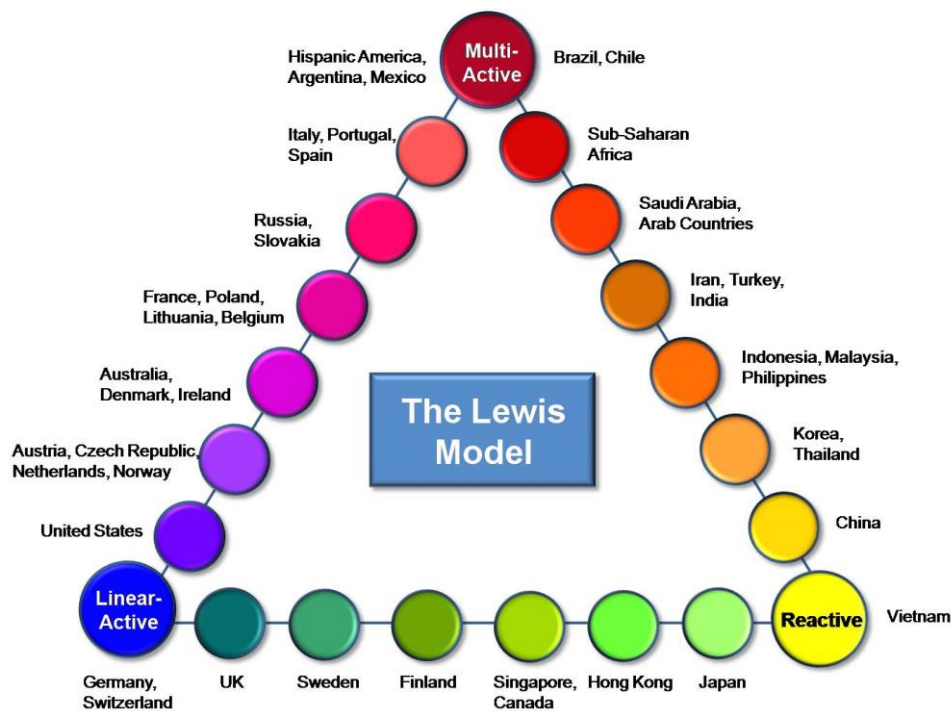


Figure 2.1 Cultural Types of Lewis Model

Table 2.2 Basic Characteristics of Three Cultural Types

LINEAR-ACTIVE	MULTI-ACTIVE	REACTIVE
Talks half the time	Talks most of the time	Listens most of the time
Plans ahead step by step	Plans grand outline only	Looks at general principles
Polite but direct	Emotional	Polite and indirect
Partly conceals feelings	Displays feelings	Conceals feelings
Confronts with logic	Confronts emotionally	Never confronts
Dislikes losing face	Has good excuses	Must not lose face
Rarely interrupts	Often interrupts	Doesn't interrupt
Job-oriented	People-oriented	Very people-oriented
Sticks to the facts	Juggles the facts	Statements are promises
Truth before diplomacy	Flexible truth	Diplomacy over truth
Sometimes impatient	Impatient	Patient
Separates the social & professional	Interweaves the social & professional	Connects the social & professional
Does one thing at a time	Multi tasks	Reacts to partner's action

As members of a linear-active culture, they are task-oriented and well organized. They make plans carefully and focus on one thing at a time. Linear-active people are not as talkative as those of multi-active culture; they tend to interrupt others less frequently, and are sometimes good listeners. Linear-active cultures also work with fixed hours; are result oriented and gain status through achievement. The cultures represented in this category are the people from Germany, America, and the United Kingdom.

In general, people of multi-active society like to expose their emotions and opinions as well as use body language during communication. They are usually animated and talkative (usually quite fast), and tends to do more than one thing at one time without proper planning. Multi-actives achieve status by having charismatic personalities and connections. It might be challenging for the linear-active people to deal with them because of their flexible work schedule and sometimes they ignore the rules. South American countries like Brazil, Argentina and Peru are at the heart of multi active scale.

Reactive cultures are polite listeners of the cultural categories and they are found typically in Asia, with China, Japan, and Vietnam. According to the Lewis Model (2008), the Chinese belong to reactive culture. People of reactive cultures are quite polite listeners; they prefer a slower-paced interaction which means putting other's opinion first before reacting to it. Speech is a reflection of their desire to promote harmony in relationships. Ancient philosophy like Confucianism dominates the way of life which shapes the reactive cultures. So confrontations will make them lose face or threaten the other's face, which against their desire of living in harmony. Thus confrontations are usually avoided. A person in a reactive culture gains status through talent and achievement.

Figure 2.1 (in page 17) aims to compare the eastern and western values and their communication styles with certain representative countries. In the following section, another

framework that explains specifically on Chinese people's ways of communication is described.

### **2.6.2 Gao's Chinese Communication Style**

To understand the modern communication style of Chinese people, a study by Gao and her team list five outstanding characteristics of Chinese communication (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998 in Fang & Faure 2011:321-322).

1. *Implicit communication*: It suggests Chinese use implicit and indirect approach to communicate. One should not utter everything in mind but leave the veiled message to listener.
2. *Listening-centered communication*: Listening-centered is considered as 'listen talks' that one keeps silent most of the time during the conversation. Speaking is equated with seniority, authority, age, or experience, so that not everyone is entitled to open and be involved in the talk.
3. *Polite communication*: In Chinese, the terms 'modest', 'courteous' are basic principles in everyday communication as the values of modesty and humility are embodied in Chinese culture.
4. *Insider-communication*: opposed to outsider. It is the relationship of the speakers which determines what is communicated and how information should be transmitted. Chinese tend to become highly involved in the conversation with those they know (insiders) but implicit and polite with outsiders (strangers).
5. *Face-directed communication*: It refers to respect for the person in-group when communicating. Relational orientation is highly regarded in Chinese Culture.

The indirect way of communication helps to facilitate the Confucian value of maintaining harmony within interpersonal relationship. The use of indirect expression may differ based on the communication context (Park & Kim, 2008:47). The framework provides a guideline for understanding Chinese communication characteristics based on the traditional Chinese cultural values. Those elements in this framework are communication criteria to most of the

Chinese. So when the Chinese are using English, the Chinese interaction pattern might also be reflected in their speech events.

The above five-point framework of Chinese communication characteristics shows some common areas. Firstly, as Lewis's model (2008) describes the reactive Chinese as one who prefers to listen to others rather than talk. Secondly, the Chinese are not supposed to confront and talk implicitly. Thirdly, the Chinese are very people-oriented in which their communication style is dependent on the interactants, whether they are insider or outsider. Next, the term 'face' is significant, as the Chinese tend to talk politely in order to protect their face. In addition, one of the Chinese ways of being polite is to conceal one's own feelings in communication.

## **2.7 Gender Differences in Language**

The gender aspect is another area of study in investigating group oral interaction. It is known that distinct linguistic features might occur in their speech although they speak the same language. This is due to their awareness of behaving appropriately to their gender identity since young. These differences range from intonation, emotion, politeness, and mannerism. Research on language and gender began in the 1970s. Among many studies, the well-known researcher Lakoff (1975) proposed theories on women's language. In her theory, men's language is self-assertive, authoritative, and direct, while women's language is immature, hyper-formal or hyper-polite and non-assertive. But this theory has both merits and demerits. Lakoff's (1975) book mentions ten features of women's language. A list of stereotypical traits of men and women is also given by Brannon (1996, cited in Stodulkova, 2013) and shown below:

Table 2.3 Stereotypical Traits of Men and Women Language

<b>Brannon's Gender Stereotype</b>		<b>Lakoff's theory of women's Language</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Female</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Aggressive</li> <li>•Not uncomfortable about being aggressive</li> <li>•Competitive</li> <li>•Unemotional</li> <li>•Hide emotions</li> <li>•Able to separate feelings from ideas</li> <li>•Dominant</li> <li>•Act as leaders</li> <li>•Self-confident</li> <li>•Ambitious</li> <li>•Not dependent</li> <li>•Direct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Religious</li> <li>•Aware of feelings of others</li> <li>•Gentle</li> <li>•Tactful</li> <li>•Quiet</li> <li>•Do not use harsh language</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lexical hedges or fillers</li> <li>2. Tag questions</li> <li>3. Rising intonation on declaratives</li> <li>4. Empty adjectives</li> <li>5. Precise colour terms</li> <li>6. Intensifiers</li> <li>7. Hypercorrect grammar,</li> <li>8. Super polite forms</li> <li>9. Avoidance of strong swear words</li> <li>10. Emphatic stress</li> </ol>

Based on the observations of the gender stereotypical traits of the researchers, particularly on language use, women are observed to be more polite, indirect and emotional than the men. Other researchers (Canary & Hause, 1993 cited in Nemati & Bayer, 2007) argue that significant difference between men and women in the aspect of communication strategies have not been found. Yet Lakoff's claims are deemed to be highly stereotyped. For example, Dubois & Crouch (1975)'s statement cited in Nemati and Bayer's (2007) study states that males used tag questions more than females did in the speech event of professional meetings, which is opposite to Lakoff's findings. This does not necessarily mean that Lakoff's findings are not applicable, as these stereotypes cannot be easily disregarded as they are still supported in recent extensive linguistic research.

A recent study (Merchant 2012: 17) suggests that women are, on the whole, more expressive than men, and they tend to speak politely in conversations, while men are more self-asserting and authoritative. Women also tend to interrupt less than men as women show an orientation of involvement with the other (ibid). Men are goal-oriented as they want to feel admired

(Gary, 1992 in Merchant, 2012:20). Hence, men are more likely to engage in arguments, propose and defend their own opinion than women (Jeong, 2003:3).

The early studies focused on answering whether women and men talk differently and why they differ. And it is believed that women tend to be different in the way they use language because of their unequal roles and status (Thorne & Henley, 1975). Hence, the later studies (Merchant, 2012; Jeong, 2003) are developed to determine the features that are contained in men's and women's language. But stereotypes such as women should be silent and more polite is not a reflection of reality but just a reflection of the social expectations. In light of rapid development, globalization, and the increased use of the internet, the dynamics of communication style keep changing. For instance, in modern China, women, especially some young girls, could behave like a boy and speak loudly, while some men behave in a more feminine way (Meng et al., 2007). There is also potential of a gradual convergence of men and female in communication behaviour (Qian, 2010) because of the increasing social status of women.

Although criticisms of the framework are well documented by researchers such as Lakoff (1975), and Brannon (1996), a more specific focus on gender difference in interaction style is deemed appropriate as it is relevant in this present study.

### **2.7.1 Gender Differences in Interactional Style**

Research has demonstrated that the gender factor plays a significant role on group oral interaction. In some of these researches, in order to explain the gender differences in interaction style, the studies focus on different groups with various gender compositions. In an early research conducted by Carli (1989), subjects in mixed-and same-gender groups were asked to discuss two topics. It is found that both male and female participants' interaction behaviour is dependent on the gender of his or her partner. The results show that the

participants disagree more when interacting with male than with female, in which women exhibit a greater amount of agreement. Women tend to show group solidarity whereas men disagree and give opinions or directions (Carli, 1989). The explanation for this difference is the rigid status hierarchy that men have a higher status than women in group interactions and it would be larger in mixed-gender than in same-gender interactions (ibid).

Furthermore, gender differences in interaction style are larger in same-gender than in mixed-gender groups. Carli (2006) who has carried out a series of research on gender and language since 1989, in a more recent work draws attention to gender differences in interactional styles with some other typical findings. She observes that men practise more status asserting, domination and negative communication, whereas women practise more collaborative, warm and supportive communication. Women are warm because they expend effort to maintain the conversations by encouraging or reinforcing other's speech (e.g. indicate agreement using 'yeah' and 'mm hmm'). In addition, conveys support and offers encouragement in the interactions among women, with no gender differences in mixed-gender interactions. Men are less mitigated, particularly for direct intrusive interruptions. However, people modify their communication style depending on whom they are interacting with. Hence, communications appear to be warmer and more communal to women than men. Clearly, gender differences are evident and are dependent on whether the interaction occurs between same- or opposite-gender groups. Other researchers like Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin were also interested in the gender system and interaction. In their study (1999), they approve the findings of Carli, and proposed that men talk more, engage in more active task behaviour in cross-sex interaction as men appear to occupy higher status position. Yet in same-gender groups there were no differences between men and women in participation. Gender differences are also determined by the situational factors. The above features are particularly in task directed setting which is also the main concern of the current study.

Other researchers like Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin (1999) were also interested in the gender system and interaction. In their study they confirm Carl's findings, and concur that men talk more, engage in more active task behaviour in cross-gender interaction as men appear to occupy higher status position. Yet in same-sex groups there are no differences between men and women in participation. Gender differences are also determined by the situational factors. The above features are particularly in task directed setting which is also the main concern of the current study.

### **2.7.2 Gender and Interactional Style in China**

The researches in China dated in the 1990s' are much later than those in western countries. With the progress of linguistic researches, Chinese scholars such as Qian (2010) and Shen (2008) also study gender differences in interaction style among Chinese in general. It is found there are conversational gender differences in manner and strategy (Shen, 2008: 21). Shen's research highlights characteristics of males in conversation, and lists men as:

1. competitive in a conversation and tend to control the chance to talk and choose topic;
2. stress their own personality less mentions of the previous topic;
3. react slower to other's speech and short;
4. frequently interrupt others in a conversation and they will not apologize to others;
5. there are more opposition and attacks in males' conversation and more quarrel, curses, satires and threats.

In contrast, women:

1. appear to be equal and cooperative in the conversation, where everybody has the chance to speak and take turns to speak;



2. emphasize on the coincidence of opinions and discriminate against those who hold different views.
3. practise active reacting to others' words and use "mm", "hmm" to show they are listening.
4. seldom interrupt others.
5. use more humble words and will not offend others, if they have different opinion with others, they will express it in an indirect way.

In another study, Qian (2010) focuses on different interactional style of male and female in communication. This study found that Chinese females could apply conversation strategy better than the males do. There are three main distinctive features that are identified:

1. Gender differences in topic selection and strategies used: women would like to talk about personal life and make great effort to maintain the communication. When a woman communicates with a man of an equivalent status as her, the woman normally exhibits passive manner to the man
2. Different interactional style on several aspects: men are conversely, more active than women in public but become speechless in private. Besides, women are concerned about equality and cooperation, but men are self-centred, would like to dominate communication.
3. Women are dramatic and emotional especially when talking with women. In contrast, talks between men are devoid of emotions. In addition, women prefer implicit speech, are more polite and modest than men.
4. it is found that men are more talkative especially in social occasion with cross-gender interactants, yet women behave as good listeners.

Both of these two researchers provide the reasons for the gender differences in communication in which, social and cultural factors give the most impact. Generally speaking, people will adapt to the language style that is suited to their gender in the process of growing. For example, girls learn feminine language from their female family members. But the stereotype of the cultural mode is an important factor that shapes the adult male and female language use and behaviour.

As for different communication scope, adult males and females acquire different speech styles and keep them for the rest of their lives. In the Chinese people's minds, male and female play different social roles in that females are expected to be gentle, polite and emotional, while males are supposed to be steady, strong and exhibits masculinity especially when speaking.

Since researchers (Qian, 2010 & Shen, 2008) have mentioned that women speak more politely than men, how men and women apply politeness strategies during the interaction process will be elaborated in following section.

## **2.8 Politeness**

According to dictionary.com, *politeness* is defined as showing good manners toward others, as in behaviour and speech. Culture and gender are two most important variables in politeness behaviour. The well-developed politeness theory provides a better understanding of how people convey their meaning through language use, and this is related to the field of pragmatics. In general, politeness involves the consideration of other people's feelings. The differences between Chinese politeness and Western politeness do exist. The linguistic politeness reflects cultural values. Different cultural groups express and understand politeness in different ways.

### 2.8.1 The Chinese Phenomenon of Politeness

In the field of linguistics the concept of politeness is complicated. Linguists such as Lakoff (1975), Brown & Levinson (1978), and Leech (1983) are the earliest scholars to study *politeness* in the western culture. They have made major contributions to the development of the politeness theory, and the term “face” carries a distinctive explanation in different culture of politeness between China and the West. Many other theorists have built or disproved their politeness based on differing ideas and principles.

Gu (1990) puts forward the concept of Chinese politeness, which emphasizes the notion of “face”. This study aims to confirm whether the expected characteristics in Chinese communication can be found in the interaction between the Chinese speakers of English; while the concept of *mian zi* or *lian* which is known as ‘face’, is a key concept in the studies on Chinese politeness principles (Aziz, 2005; Li, 2009; Haugh & Hinze, 2003; Lin, 2010; Jin & Li, 2013; Zhu & Bao, 2010). Hence, to understand Chinese politeness, it is necessary to study ‘face’ (*mianzi* and *lian*).

*Face*. The concept of “face” in Chinese culture is derived from the Confucian philosophy. Confucianism is the ideological foundation of face-work in Chinese language which means to save each other’s face to harmonize their interactions (Goffman, 1967, & Jia, 1997 cited in Aziz, 2005). Whereas the concept “face” is more than pure “self-image”, it’s not simply an “individual thing” (Mao, 1994 cited in Aziz, 2005). Jia (1997) identifies four characteristics that unite the concept of face in Chinese: relational, communal/social, hierarchical, and moral. Chinese face emphasizes more than just individual desires but the harmony of individual behaviours with social expected norms.

The Chinese acknowledge two kinds of face (Aziz, 2005). One is known as “*lian*” which refers to the reputation of a person that ‘a man has *lian* will get respect from the others and

he/she performs moral behaviour in the society. Another kind of face is called “*manzi*” which stands for reputation, and is achieved by gaining from the honour of one’s own community. However, these two types of face are never independent. When a person performs inappropriate or disagreeable behaviour such as premarital pregnancy, it is said one loses ‘*lian*’. But to lose “*mianzi*” normally refers to loss of reputation or prestige because of certain failures or misfortune. Losing *lian* is more serious than losing *mianzi*. Once *lian* is lost, it is hard to maintain *mianzi*. Therefore, the importance of the concept “face” in maintaining harmony in communication is to prevent others’ and own ‘*manzi*’ from being hurt during an interaction. This requires speakers be polite in the communication. Being polite in language use makes a good impression on a Chinese, and it will increase one’s reputation (Tao, 2010).

As far as politeness is concerned, Chinese politeness has its own characteristics. In Chinese society, the “politeness principle” is different from that of western countries for sure. First of all, “politeness” in Chinese culture is binding to the term “etiquette”. On one aspect, it is mentioned before that Chinese is a collectivism society (Xu, 2008:83, Fang & Faure 2011:321) so modesty is one of the politeness principles of China which is not preferred in the western countries. In Gu’s (1992) research, he believes that there are four basic concepts in traditional Chinese “politeness principle” and they are still prevalent in modern China (Since 1949). They are respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth and refinement.

‘Respectfulness’ refers to speaker’s positive appreciation or showing admiration to satisfy the hearer’s face. ‘Modesty’ is a kind of ‘self-denigration’ behaviour to avoid being proud to others. ‘Attitudinal warmth’ requires speakers to be kind, considerate of others and ‘refinement’ obligates speakers to behave under certain norms. In interaction, the four notions are usually demonstrated in face-to-face interactions because verbal communication is not aimed at exchange of information only, but shaping interpersonal relationship as well. Note

that the four elements need not co-occur to constitute politeness, that is, the speech which highlights one of them will be perceived as polite speech (Gu, 1990).

Aziz (2005) explored the face and politeness phenomena in modern China. This study was carried out among 100 Chinese citizens to investigate how their perceptions of politeness are reflected in their interactions. The findings of this study show that although China is changing, the perceptions of the Chinese norms of politeness remained constant. With relation to interaction, the Chinese often avoid conflicts with the interlocutors for saving each other's face, which could imply that the concept of '*face*' is present. Gender was not found as a distinctive factor in regards to the perceptions of politeness but age do. Younger people are more straightforward and direct in expressing themselves than the elders. Besides, students are less hierarchical in their talk to interlocutors. And finally, the Chinese tends to maintain harmony among the interlocutors.

### **2.8.2 Politeness in Western culture**

The way of expressing politeness in China and English speaking countries are different. Politeness has been a major concern in pragmatics since the late 1970s. For frame theory, the face theory of Brown and Levinson (1978) and the politeness principle of Leech (1983) will be reviewed as they provide a systematic demonstration on the politeness usage, which contribute to politeness studies of different cultures.

### **2.8.3 Leech's Politeness Principle in English Culture**

In western cultures, personal right and equality are believed to be unavoidable so no matter if a conversation is between parents and children, boss and employee, or teachers and students, they must follow the tact maxim to reduce threat to the other's face (Zhu & Bao, 2010:849). The British linguist Leech (1983) had listed six politeness principles to explain how politeness operates in conversational exchanges. Leech's view of politeness involves a set of

politeness maxims according to English culture. Among these are (Leech, 1983: 132 in Li, 2009):

Table 2.4 Leech's Politeness Principles

<b>Tact Maxim:</b>	try to minimize cost to other or maximize benefit to other; e.g.: May I help you?
<b>Generosity Maxim:</b>	try to minimize benefit to self or maximize cost to self; e.g.: Use my pen, please.
<b>Approbation Maxim:</b>	try to minimize dispraise of other or maximize praise of other; e.g.: You are the best one.
<b>Modesty Maxim:</b>	try to minimize praise of self or maximize dispraise of self; e.g.: You have done a great job.
<b>Agreement Maxim:</b>	try to minimize disagreement between self and other or maximize agreement between self and other; e.g.: Well, I like the shoes.
<b>Sympathy Maxim:</b>	try to minimize antipathy between self and other or maximize sympathy between self and other; e.g.: a: We lost the game. b: I am sorry to hear that.

According to Gu (1992), in English, when one wants to ask another to do something, they will choose some indirect speech like: 'Could you please open the window?' However, as it is mentioned above that people such as the elders/seniors have the right to give the others commands or requests in Chinese culture. The 'modesty' maxim which is specifically being emphasized in China is also included in Leech's (1983) politeness principles. While the concept of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978) is more solid, it explains the term 'face' and the function of politeness strategies in the discourse.

#### 2.8.4 Brown and Levinson's 'politeness' theory

Politeness phenomenon exists globally (Tao, 2010). Brown and Levinson (1978) developed a theory of the universal linguistic politeness that drew on Goffman's idea of face and expanded upon Lakoff's (1975) rules of politeness. They analyse politeness regarding to the

need of preserving 'face' (both self-image and others'). Face here could mean self-esteem, or self-image in the social attributes.

In general, the politeness model is built to understand various strategies in interlocutors' interactional behaviour to achieve certain communicative goals. Face is something that can be lost, maintained and enhanced during the interaction. The concept of face by Goffman's (1967) is, face is like a mask that change depends on the interlocutors and variety of the social interactions. People are emotionally attached to their face so in social interaction, they will apply politeness strategies to maintain each other's face. Besides, according to Brown and Levinson there are two kinds of face: Negative Face and positive Face (Brown and Levinson, 1978:66).

Negative face is basically the rights to freedom of action. Another aspect is 'positive face'. Positive face refers to people's consistent self-image that needs to be accepted and liked by others. In simple terms, negative face emphasizes independence and the importance of other's time and needs. The strategies of implementing negative face are: do not impose one's own willingness to others and give the right to others to have their own choice. In contrast, positive face emphasises solidarity: 'we', so that both speakers share the same thing and have a common goal. Thus, utilising the concepts 'face' and 'politeness' are regarded as: 'positive politeness' and 'negative politeness'. In order to avoid face threatening and ensure the conversation goes on smoothly, it is necessary for speakers to make some efforts for protecting both self and others' faces.

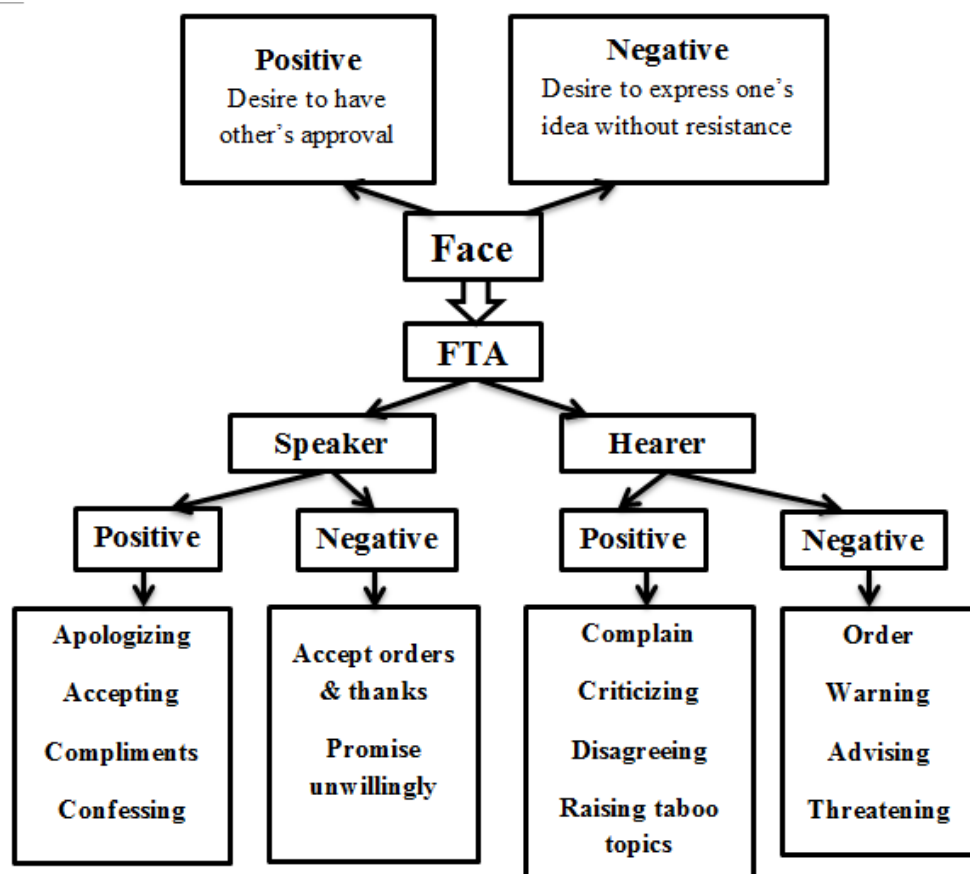


Figure 2.2 Brown and Levinson's 'politeness' strategies

In order to satisfy the interactants' face regardless of whether an FTA occurs or not, Brown and Levinson (1978) propose strategies that can be applied by the interactants to deal with FTAs. So when we use positive politeness, we use speech strategies that emphasize solidarity with the hearer by using informal or direct expressions; or using 'we'. For example: "Hey, Bob. What are we having for lunch?" When negative politeness is applied, the same situation will become like: "Hello, Mr Lau. What do you want to have for lunch?" But negative politeness is more likely to take place when there is a social distance between the interlocutors.



There are four types of politeness strategies according to Brown and Levinson (1978):

Table 2.5 Examples of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies

Type	Function	Example
1. <i>Bald On-record</i>	In situations where people know each other well or in an urgency. Maintaining face is not the first priority or main goal of a conversation. Not maintaining faces, but can be used to threaten it if taken out of context.	1. A person may shout, "watch out" if they see someone is in danger 2. Between friends, one asks another to: "Eat your peas" at supper.
2. <i>Off-record</i>	A more indirect strategy. The speaker does not impose on the hearer. As a result, face is maintain, and hearer is given opportunity to say no.	'I know you're busy. Feel free to join the party if you have the time.'
3. <i>Positive politeness</i>	Minimize the threat to the audience's positive face. This can be done by attending to the audience's needs, invoking equality and feelings of belonging to the group, hedging or indirectness, avoiding disagreement, using humor and optimism and making offers and promises.	'Oh, well, don't be mad. I am just kidding. We're friends, aren't we?'
4. <i>Negative politeness</i>	Minimize threats to the audience's negative face. An example of negative politeness would is when the speaker requires something from the audience, but wants to maintain the audience's right to refuse. This can be done by being indirect, using hedges or questions, minimizing imposition and apologizing.	I'm sorry, but could you please close the door before you leave?

Generally speaking, speakers try to maintain each other's face during the interaction using different strategies. In everyday talk and real-life conversation, the politeness phenomena will always exist in all kinds of verbal interaction. Moreover, conversation consists of sequences. On close analysis, FTAs can be found in the opening sequence and the closing sequence. That is because when considering the closing of a conversation, one speaker could not simply

shut down the talk but brought to an end a conversation (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973 cited in Silvia, 2013:1).

## **2.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the features of group interaction which make it different from the other speech events in the first section. And then culture was brought in to incorporate the Chinese cultural values and its impact on Chinese communication characteristics. Some major theories of culture like Hofstede (2011:7), and Gao & Ting-Toomey (1998) are applied towards the development of cultural theme as a framework to the study on group interaction among the Chinese.

In taking a gender perspective in the analysis of men and female differences or similarities in performing group interaction behaviours, it is hoped that the findings of current study will provide a better understanding of group oral interaction among the Chinese.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides the detail of the research design and methods for the present study. As identified in Chapter one, the major issues that will be addressed in the thesis are (1) the discourse features of group interaction among Chinese speakers of English, particularly focusing on the sequential structure of discussion openings and closings; and (2) the influences of cultural values on the discourse practices in opening and closing of the interactions; and (3) gender similarities and differences in the interactions.

Traditionally research on interactional styles and cultural impact has relied on data gathered using techniques such as questionnaire (Carli, 1989) and researchers' field notes and observations (Carli, 2006). Thus, this chapter describes the main issues concerning the research design in three sections. In the first section, there is an introduction to participants that contributed to the current study, as well as reasons for selecting them. The next section is about the research strategy. In this section, data source, data collection instruments and procedures will be explained in detail. Finally, section three deals with data analysis and a brief summary of the analytic frameworks.

#### **3.2 The Research Participants**

In order to achieve the research purpose, Patton's (1990 cited in Coyne, 1997) homogeneous sampling is employed to conduct a purposeful sampling so individuals who possess the traits (e.g. age, gender, background) required in this study are selected. The participants are also volunteers in this study. This means that some of the participants are known to the researcher but the researcher is being only an observer in the interaction does not play any significant

role in the group oral interaction. This procedure led to the choice of individuals who were articulate and willing to share with the others in the group when the data collection began.

The participants involved in this study are postgraduate Chinese students who are undergoing tertiary level education in universities of Malaysia. Their ages range from 22 to 30 years. These subjects are postgraduate students and their minimal level of English proficiency is IELTS 6 because this is the requirement for them to gain entry into Malaysian universities' postgraduate studies. Their language proficiency level enables them to carry out group interactions in English. The participants are studying in different majors.

In order to study gender difference in group interaction, the sex composition of the groups systematically varies. There are four speakers in each group interaction and data will be obtained from three different groups: one is an all-female group (AF), one is an all-male group (AM) and the third group is a mixed group (M) consisting of 2 males and 2 females. The subjects comprised of 6 males and 6 females. The participants of the mixed gender group are currently master students from National University of Malaysia. And the participants of the all-female group and all-male group are all master students of the University of Malaya. The basic background of the participants is a primary criterion. Thus, a questionnaire (Appendix I) regarding the background information of the participants was distributed. The corresponding grouping of the participants is presented in the table below.

Table 3.1 Gender Variables of Participants and Corresponding Groups

<b>Variables of Participants</b>	<b>Group Gender</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Time of Recording</b>
Single gender	All-Male (AM) Group	M1;M2;M3;M4	35'34''
	All-Female (AF) Group	F1;F2;F3;F4	23'24''
Mixed-gender	Mixed (M) Group	M5;M6;F5;F6	14'55''

The age range of the participants is roughly around 25, and each group contains a relatively elder participant. All the participants have at least 12 years of English learning experiences. These participants were selected from two national universities of Malaysia. They had either IELTS qualification, or English language proficiency certificate obtained from UM as their minimum English proficiency attainment. The tables below present the basic background information of each participant.

Table 3.2 Background Information of the Participants

	Participant	Age	University & Major	Years of living oversea	Occupation
<b>Male (M)</b>	MP1	28	UM ; Linguistics	2.5	English Teacher
	MP2	24	UM ; Economics	1.5	Student
	MP3	23	UM; Engineering	1.5	Student
	MP4	23	UM; Business	1	Student
	MP5	26	UKM; Linguistics	6.5	Website manager
	MP6	25	UKM; Linguistics	6	Mandarin teacher
<b>Female (F)</b>	FP1	24	UM; Economics	1.5	Student
	FP2	30	UM; Linguistics	3.5	Lecturer
	FP3	24	UM; Linguistics	2	Student
	FP4	23	UM; Linguistics	1	Student
	FP5	26	UKM; Linguistics	6	Student
	FP6	28	UKM; Linguistics	6.5	Student

**Key:** UKM: National University of Malaysia    UM: University of Malaya

### 3.3 The Research Design

This is a qualitative research which uses a relatively extensive corpus of utterances from a small number of participants. The analysis is done on the textual descriptions of the discourse features of group oral interactions, and the data obtained are in English. First of all, the participants were informed only on the purpose of this study, but not the rest of the details.

### 3.3.1 The Instruments for Data Collection

(a) A questionnaire (Appendix I) regarding the background information of the participants was distributed. A combination of the participants' information is put into a table (see Table 3.2).

(b) Video and tape recordings are much richer sources of conversational data than other ways of capturing interaction (Heritage, 1995). Thus, audio and video recorders were used to get audio and visual recordings for transcription in this study.

(c) Other than the questionnaire mentioned, the three topics that were discussed by the participants are as follow:

Topic 1: The use of English should be given more emphasis in the Chinese educational system. Do you agree? *Provide reasons*

Topic 2: Discuss whether it is better for Chinese students to pursue postgraduate studies overseas. *Give your opinions and provide reasons*

Topic 3: Is technology making people more alienated? *Discuss*

The topics given to the participants are based on some current affairs in the Chinese context that are known to the participants. This enabled them to express their opinion based on their general knowledge of current affairs in China and their own experiences.

### 3.3.2 Implementation of the Research Design

#### a) Procedure of Data collection

The research aims to collect naturally occurring speech from discussions on a set of given topics. So the three discussion topics were not given to the participants beforehand so as to ensure that the interactions are as spontaneous as possible. In each group discussion, the participants are instructed to discuss the three topics without an assigned chairperson. There is no time limit for them to finish the discussions but a minimum of ten minutes for the whole

discussion is required to ensure that the researcher could get the target discourse needed for data analysis.

### **b) Setting**

Since the participants are not from one university, the locations for the group discussions by these three groups differed. Group discussion for the mixed-group was conducted in the National University of Malaysia. The other two groups carried out their discussions in the University of Malaya campus. The all-female group and the all-male group discussions were carried out in the main library of the University of Malaya. The location for these two groups of participants was an air-conditioned discussion room that allows 8 people to sit around a long table. The participants from the mixed-group were arranged to sit at a quiet area.

### **c) Video and Audio Recording**

The participants were informed that they are the subjects of this research. They gave the researcher permission and agreed to be videotaped and have their audio recorded, (see Appendix III & IV for consent form). In addition, they were also informed that the researcher will act as an outsider when they carry out the discussion. There are two primary ways of gathering audio and video recording. Basically, the transcription of the spoken discourse is obtained from the audio recording. But video recording is also necessary as it allows researchers to view their non-verbal behaviors, and recognize the speakers of each turn in the discussion; it is the source and proof of the transcriptions as well. In total, 74 minutes 3 seconds of interaction data was recorded for the study.

In order to get clearer audio recordings, the digital audio recorder was placed at the middle of the table closest to all four participants in the group. A wide angle digital camera was used as a video recorder by the researcher to put at an angle that captured all four participants. The

recording process was not interrupted to change batteries so there was no loss of video or audio clips in all the discussions.

#### **d) Transcription**

For each of the group discussions, there is a set of audio and video data contained in one single document. The present study relies mostly on the audio data, as it is clearer in sound quality for transcription. Repeated listening of the audio recordings was necessary during the transcribing process. The transcribing process was found to be complicated at some points. Due to two or more participants talking at the same time, the video recordings will be viewed consistently from time to time to clarify ambiguous areas in the interaction, such as, who is speaking and who is speaking to whom.

In the coding stage, it involves categorizing various linguistic features such as interruptions, overlaps, topic movements and so on. The present study will only interpret the textual features of the language produced by the participants. Thus, hand gestures, eye-contact, bodily movements and nodding were not coded and were only referred to where there was a necessity. The comprehensive transcription methods and symbols used by conversation analysis researchers are adapted for this study. The Jefferson's (2004) Transcription System will be applied for this study's own transcription. The transcription notations used in the present research are listed in Appendix II.

### **3.4 Frameworks of Data Analysis**

The transcripts were analysed in order to identify the discourse features, found in opening and closing phases of the group discussions.

Conversation Analysis is a powerful analytical tool to study spoken interaction. CA was first developed to study the talk patterns of daily conversations between social actors but it is now



widely applied to other forms of talk-in-interactions, such as interview, meeting, group or classroom interaction (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990).

The CA researchers considered the talks in the interaction as social actions that are rule-governed and sequentially organized by the interlocutors (Sacks, 1974). It allows us to understand the interlocutors' utterances and conducts, and make sense the framework of that particular social interaction. So CA is an approach to understand the operating structure and process of social interaction such as turn taking, sequential structure (Lee, 2011: 16-18). By exploring various features of talk-in-interaction, the researchers are able to explain why people say and behave as such.

Scholars have used CA to investigate institutional talk in which various features of talk, including turn-taking (Sacks et al's 1974, cited in Goodwin & Heritage, 1990), sequential organisation (Sack, 1978 in cited Coulthard, 1985), the opening section and closing section (Chan, 2005) have been explored. CA therefore, is suitable for examining the features of group interaction talks and the sequential structures of discussion openings and closings.

The researcher carried out a descriptive analysis on the discussion of participant interactions in group using some of the elements of conversation analysis as the focus was not on in-depth conversation analysis. The data utilized three theoretical frameworks to analyse group discussion discourse at different levels: namely, conversation analysis (CA), and the Politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1978) and Gao's (1998) framework of Chinese communication characteristics. In particular, CA is used to analyse the features of discussion openings and closings (for research question one) as well as the gender differences and similarities in group interaction behaviour for research question three (turn-taking, turn-length, overlapping and interruption). Gao's five-point framework represents the Confucian

cultural values (e.g. face maintenance, politeness, listening-centred) and the influence on Chinese communication. This is applied to answer the second research question.

With regards to the concept of politeness, it appears that politeness is culture specific while depending on situation and participants involved in the interaction. Hence, there is no universal politeness. The focus of the investigation is how politeness strategies are being applied in the opening and closing sequences. In the present study, Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory will be applied to analyse gender differences and similarities in the use of politeness strategies. This rather complex multi-layer classification (compared to Leech's politeness principle) allows the analysis of the politeness phenomenon in the opening and closing sequences.

In the following Chapter, the opening and closing sequences, a reflection of the cultural values in the Chinese and the features of gender differences and similarities in group discussion will be analysed in turn.

### **3.5 Ethnical Consideration**

The researcher obtained consent from the participants beforehand. Before the discussion, consent forms (Appendix III & IV) were distributed to the participants. The audio and video taping of the discussion was used for transcription and analysis purposes only. All the names of the participants will remain anonymous to protect their identities.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDING**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, firstly, a description of the openings and closing sequences in group oral interaction will be provided followed by a discussion of the findings. Then a closer description on openings and closings of the three group interactions is given to provide some insights to the interactional patterns. Finally, a general report of the significant cultural features that have been identified in the opening and closing sequences will be presented.

The features that are found in the interactions of each group will be summarized which will then be followed by a stage-by-stage analysis of some discourse features and politeness strategies which have surfaced when gender differences and similarities are brought into the discussion of the findings.

#### **4.2 Applying Politeness Strategies in Openings and Closings**

Politeness can be expressed via the openings and closings of a discussion, that is, topic initiation and termination. It is important for the interaction to be conducted smoothly and it is also perceived to be displaying politeness. For example, closing a conversation suddenly may appear rude; if bringing a conversation to a close by thanking or providing a reason leaves your other interlocutors a warm glow (David et al., 2012). Men and women behave differently in performing Politeness Principle (ibid). Women are perceived better in apply politeness principle by expressing approbation, sympathy, using euphemism and humor (Li, 2007). Besides, it is shown that gender differences in interactional strategy are larger in same-gender than in mixed-gender groups (Carli, 1989). Therefore, the following section, the

politeness strategies that are observed in the opening and closing sequences will also be demonstrated in the description.

### **4.3 Opening in General**

It appears that there is no homogeneous pattern in the group interactions, and this could be due to the fact that the participants differed in interactional style, and their way of interacting is inconsistent. Stenstom (1994) categorizes the three types of introductory procedures that can precede conversation. They are:

1. Summoning: apply to call for the hearer's attention;
2. Framing: signal that a message is on the way or there will be a change of topic, with the marker '*all right*', '*anyway*', '*now*', '*OK*', and '*well*'; and
3. Focusing: calling the listener's attention to focusing on what is to come.

Group interaction in the form of a discussion is a kind of face-to-face conversation (ibid). It does not necessarily need to have the introductory procedures. Unlike telephone calls which have clear opening and closing sections, openings of group discussions are different, and sometimes might also lack an opening altogether before the message is introduced.

In addition, previous researches have examined the openings in face-to-face interactions, including job interviews (e.g. Cheepen, 1988), university students' small-group discussion (e.g. Watanabe, 1993; Stokoe, 2000), hospital counter service staff attending to clients (Kuang, et al., 2012) and work teams business meetings (Chan, 2005). To cite an example, Watanabe's (1993) study on Japanese and American speakers of English on opening sequences revealed that the opening of discussions by Japanese speakers were carried out in a very deliberate way. In contrast, Americans tend to begin their discussion with no particular

structure. In this case, one might predict that as Asian people, Chinese speakers probably open their discussion in a similar fashion as Japanese speakers. However, another study carried out in Thailand, another Asian country (Morrow & Jungsatitkul, 2010) showed that the Thai English speakers are similar to the American English native speakers in the way that their discussion is unplanned and they take turns freely. The contrasting findings are inconclusive and one cannot make definite generalisations of the findings. In this study, the aim is to examine how Chinese speakers of English who are young adults pursuing postgraduate studies, open their interaction in a group discussion and carry out their talk.

#### **4.4 Description of Openings**

##### **4.4.1 Opening of All-Female Group Discussion (AFGD)**

The data obtained in this study was recorded and then transcribed using an adaptation of Jefferson's (2004) transcription convention. To begin the discussion of findings on the opening sequences, Extract 1 below shows how the all-female group discussion (henceforth AFGD) unfolded in their talk. The oral interaction took place in a room located at the main library in University of Malaya. The discussion was not chaired by any of the four participants. They were seated randomly at one side of the table, and shortly after the researcher introduced the procedure of the study, the talk begins with a pre-opening. AFP2 (all female participant number 2) signals that they are ready to carry out the discussion (line 1). At this point the researcher reminded them to speak louder (line 2). This interruption affected the discussion and caused a delay in the occurrence of the opening. An exchange of small talk is initiated by AFP2 as she asks where the video recorder is and AFP3 takes the turn to answer to AFP2. After some informal exchanges (lines 4-7), the official opening sequence of the discussion is noted.

### Extract 1. AFGD\_O01

Context: participants had finished the free talk and reading the topics.

Turns	Message	Line
001 AFP2:	<i>zan kai shi ba</i> let's begin	1
002 Researcher:	<i>sheng yin shao wei da yi dian OK</i> please speak a little bit louder OK	2
003 AFP2:	<i>na ni de recorder zai naer ne</i> so where is your recorder	3
004 AFP3:	here, hahaha...((point to the recorder))	4
005 AFP2:	ah::	5
006 AFP1:	<i>ni dui zhe recorder shuo le ban tian le</i> you have been talking to the recorder all along	6
	((all laugh 2.0))	7
007 AFP3:	I will help you	8
	(pause 2.0)	9
008 AFP3:	first one do you think that we should emphasis English in the Chinese educational system	10 11
	((all laugh 3.0))	12
009 AFP2:	give your reasons	13

There is a short pause of 2 seconds in line 9 and this appears to indicate that all the participants are ready for the discussion. AFP3 signals her intention to start the discussion by going immediately to the first topic (line 10) and draws the participants' attention to the first discussion topic. However, this starting point is followed by laughter from all the participants, which probably indicates that they are relaxed and are able to establish a friendly atmosphere. This concurs with Tannen (1990)'s finding when she explored the way American women seemed to have adopted a relaxed posture in all-female group when they share laughter.

Following this short exchange, AFP2 continues on and announces the discussion open (line 13) and draws the participants' attention to the first discussion topic (line 10). Based on the above analysis, the opening occurs in line 10 to indicate that the group is ready to begin a more formal discussion; however, the whole opening sequence appears to begin at an earlier point, in line 1 by AFP2. The utterance '*let's begin*' is addressed to all the participants, in other words, this utterance also acts as a signal to let the other participants know that the

discussion is about to start. Then a 'formal' start at line 10 is interrupted by laughter for 3 seconds. Subsequently AFP2 closes with a statement (line 13) on the first topic, which is then completed by AFP3, and this finally ends the whole opening sequence.

From the above extract, it is found that the whole opening sequence of the AFGD appears to be quite straightforward, and is not constructed by any particular participant. Unlike the findings reported by Chan (2005) who investigated interactional features at formal meetings, here there seems to be a lack of obvious domination in the flow of the whole opening sequence. It begins with a formal polite opening '*let's begin*' and laughter occurs twice within 5 seconds (lines 7 & 12), and this suggests that shared laughter signals coalition between the interactants (Lavelle & McCabe, 2012). The atmosphere is relaxed and there is no pressure to perform well in the interaction, rather the participants seem to be having a natural conversation.

In terms of politeness, in this extract, the participants appear to satisfy one another's positive face by showing their engagement in this discussion. In Extract 1, AFP3 takes the initiation to invite the others into the discussion by using '*let's*' and '*we*' to begin the task. She says '*first one do you think that we should emphasis English in the Chinese educational system*'. The participants satisfy each other's positive face as AFP3 raises the topic. Consequently, the other female participants show their engagement in the interaction with laughter and then they self-select to take their turns to offer their views. It is apparent then that politeness strategies are observed via the opening sequences of a discussion.

In another extract, more of these conversations follow. Often in informal conversations topics are free flowing and there is no agenda. In this study, topics were given to guide the talk

among the speakers. Usually a discussion is made up of episodes and every one of them has a focus point, which is the topic (Maynard, 1980). Unlike what was found in extract 1, the opening of the second topic is more straightforward. Here AFP3 provides an evaluation ‘*that’s good*’ (line 111) to the point given by AFP1 on the first discussion topic. Then AFP3 closes the former topic by applying a termination maker ‘*ok*’ and immediately turns to introducing the second topic.

### Extract 2. AFGD\_O02

Context: each participant has sufficiently given their own opinions.

Turn	Message	Line
045 AFP3:	yes(.) [sometimes]	109
046 AFP1:	[so .hhh ] I don’t know ((hehe:))	110
047 AFP3:	that’s good(.) ok let’s move to the second one(.) whether it is better for Chinese students to pursue postgraduate studies overseas	111 112
	(pause 3.0)	113
048 AFP1:	you see might ask ourselves	114
	((all laugh 2.0))	115

After a simple closing of the first topic, AFP3’s utterance in line 111, ‘*let’s move to the second one*’ is a signal to start the second discussion topic. There are similarities between Extracts 1 and 2 in that the female participants apply ‘*let’s*’ to draw the other participants’ attention to start the discussion. This is similar to Mason’s (1994) finding where it was found that women’s communication strategies show how they value cooperation and has a communal orientation in the interaction (Merchant, 2012).

It is observed also that AFP3 seems to think that her duty (line 111 & 112) is to introduce the topic, just as she did for the earlier topic. After the start of the second topic, there is a 3 second pause which indicates that the participants are preparing to present their views soon. Once again, following the first statement by AFP1, there is shared laughter, indicating that



the talk among them is in an acceptable environment and they are relaxed. This adds to the informality of their talk even though the discussion topics given were on more serious issues. In the third topic of discussion, the opening is again performed by AFP3. It is found that the opening sequence in Extract 3 is interesting but remains straightforward. It appears that AFP3 has established a strategy of her own, as she takes it upon herself to open and also shift topics. A possible reason for this is that the four females in this group have already by now built up a safe environment with no threat on each other's face. There is acceptance of each other as indicated by their shared laughter and the ease at which they are doing this task. In this extract, instead of saying '*let's move on to the next one*', AFP3 directly uses '*next one*' to indicate the discussion on.

### **Extract 3. AFGD\_O03**

Context: the discussion on the second is about to close.

<b>Turn</b>	<b>Message</b>	<b>Line</b>
126 AFP3:	wah:: that's good(.)[next one]	290
127 AFP1:	[where ] where are we now	291
	((all laugh 1.5))	292
128 AFP3:	Is technology making people more alienated?	293
	(pause 5.0)	294
129 AFP3:	em::	295
	(pause 2.0)	296
130 AFP1:	we talk about the knowledge, the technology [in the daily life](.) I think we need to talk about the internet han[d phone]	297 298

This opening starts with AFP1's comment '*where where are we now*' (line 291) and this is followed by obvious laughter from the others (line 292). AFP1 appears to be lost but is soon directed back to the topic by AFP3. However, this could be seen as an attempt by AFP1 to initiate the discussion topic. But as seen in the extract, it is AFP3 who takes up the turn to introduce the third discussion topic (in line 293). But although she (AFP3) always takes up the turn to introduce the topic, she does not seem to be the one to give her opinion first. As observed in line 295, she fills the gap with two noticeable pauses: a hesitation filler 'em' and a pause of 5 seconds. The shift of topic indicates that the participants need time to process the

new information given, hence the 5-second pause (line 294). This is a situation where the speakers may not have done the necessary planning on what to say, according to Stenstrom's observation in her own study (1994:68). As reflected in line 295, FP3 intends to say something but needs more time to put it into words. Then an entire utterance takes place after the second pause. This opening of the discussion has a hesitant start and is filled with silence and such a combination is evident in the extract above.

#### 4.4.2 Sequential Structure of Opening in AFGD

From Extracts 1-3, it can be seen that the opening sequences of the three topics in the AFGD repeatedly consist of noticeable pauses, laughter and direct indications of discussion openings given by the same person (AFP3). But it is also to be noted that there was no indication of any intention to close the topics. The transitional marker 'ok' only occurs once in Extract 2 and there is no request for the introduction to the next discussion topic. The transition between topics is smooth, without interruption and repairs. Table 4.1 below provides an overview on the opening sections in the discussion.

Table 4.1 Summary of Features in Opening Sequences of AFGD

	Extract 1	Extract 2	Extract 3
1	Explicit indication of opening the discussion	Indication of 2 <sup>nd</sup> topic initiation	Indication of 3 <sup>rd</sup> topic initiation
2	Insertion sequences	Introduction of 2 <sup>nd</sup> topic	Insertion
3	Small talks	Noticeable pause	Laughter
4	Laughter		Introduction of 3 <sup>rd</sup> topic
5	Noticeable pause		Noticeable pause
6	Introduction of 1 <sup>st</sup> topic		Hesitation filler 'em'
7	Laughter		Noticeable pause
8	Supplement of topic introduction		

The insertion sequences delay the occurrence of the opening but it only happens before the discussion officially starts (see Extract 1). It is obvious that there is a noticeable pause after

the introduction of the second and the third topic. The reason is these topics are not given to the participants beforehand so that the participants do not have a planned utterance to continue the interaction immediately. However, in Extract 1, instead of a pause, there is laughter and a subsequent utterance on is made to introduce the topic.

To sum up, the opening sequences conducted by the AFGD are shown in Figure 4.1:

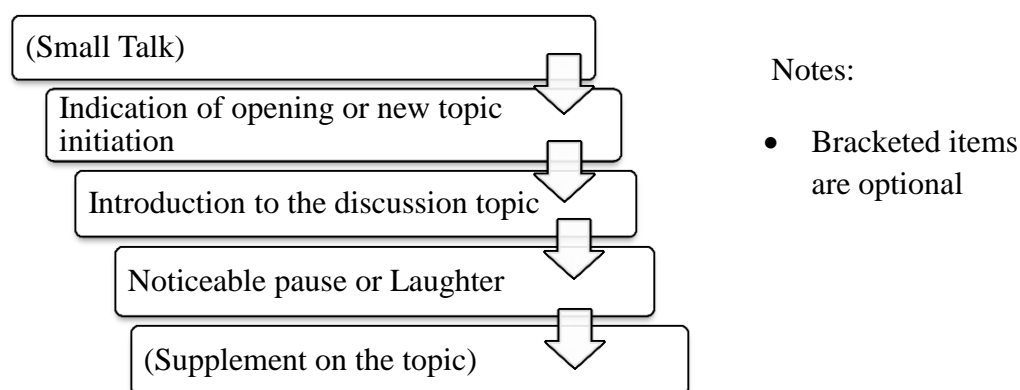


Figure 4.1 Sequential Structure of AFGD opening

Having examined opening sequences in the AFGD, the following section focuses on the openings in the all-male group discussion.

#### 4.4.3 Opening of All-Male Group Discussion (AMGD)

The extract below illustrates the opening section of the all-male group discussion (henceforth AMGD).

##### Extract 4. AMGD\_O01

Turn	Message	Line
	(pause 5.5)	1
001 AMP1:	er:: ok hello guys(.) I think today we have talk about some important	2
	issues related to English language proficiency (.) you know there is a	3
	question that try to ask us whether more emphasis should be given to	4
	the English language in our Chinese educational system (.) I think it's	5
	very important because you know.....	6

At the beginning of the extract, there is a noticeable pause of 5 seconds, which suggests that no participant is engaged in the discussion but it does not mean that the participants are not

doing anything. As shown in the video, AMP1 is looking at the other participants; AMP3 and AMP4 are reading the topics written on the paper, while AMP2 is looking at AMP1 and then signals by making eye contact with AMP1 who then initiates the discussion. This seems to suggest that there is already a shared assumption that AMP1 is the leader of the group.

Hence, AMP1 assumed the leader's role and takes the cue from AMP2. He breaks the silence with a hesitant start, which suggests he is also thinking as he produces the backchannel '*er*' (line 2), probably searching for words in his mind on how to start the discussion. There is no assigned chairperson in the discussion. It has been noted that in the Chinese culture, speaking is equated with seniority, age and authority (Fang & Faure, 2011) so not everyone is entitled to open the talk. It might then appear that AMP1 being the most senior felt it was alright for him to lead even though there was no official appointment . Apart from that, it could also be because AMP1 was previously an English teacher and the others knew about this. There could be an implicit understanding among them that his English is more competent since he was formerly a teacher of English.

On other hand, the other three speakers keep silent (first 5 seconds as shown in line 1). None of them in the group voluntarily take control of the discussion, and this could also suggests that to be a listener rather than speaking up first show's one's modesty (ibid). AMP1 then uses '*OK*' (line 2) to signal that the discussion should begin, and at the same time calls for the others' attention by addressing them as '*guys*' (line 2).

Unlike the female group, where AFP3 directly starts by reading out the first topic, AMP1 provides a short greeting to the other participants. The utterance that follows is when AMP1 starts to express his opinion with the discourse marker '*I think*', while at the same time he

declares the first topic they are going to discuss. After this, AMP1 continues to give his own opinion from line 5 and the discussion starts (see Appendix VI for full transcript).

As evident in this opening sequence is a typical situation of a politeness phenomenon. In line 2 of Extract 4 above, participant AMP1 presents a short greeting ‘*hello, guys*’ to all the group members. This utterance satisfies the hearer’s ‘positive face’, since the word ‘guys’ shows that they are close friends and familiar with each other. Then AMP1 continues the opening of the discussion. Preceding the introduction of the first discussion topic, he gives a statement to the goal of their discussion, e.g. ‘*I think today we have talk about some important issues...*’. It is also a positive politeness strategy which positively brings all the other interlocutors into the conversation with a solidarity strategy. Similar to what took place in Extract 1, here it is found that AMP1 behaves almost the same as AFP3. That is, being the assumed chairperson of the group, they satisfy group member’s ‘positive face’ by imposing the topic on the whole group.

In contrast, the opening of the second topic during the discussion differs in that there is no indication of a shift or opening of a new topic, as seen in Extract 5.

#### **Extract 5. AMGD\_002**

<b>Turn</b>	<b>Message</b>	<b>Line</b>
050 AMP3:	[yes ]	164
	not for every people but I think the more emphasis should be given to those want to study (1.0) ah:: study overseas (1.0) let’s discuss the second topic	165 166 167
051 AMP2:	yeah yeah	168
052 AMP3:	whether is better for Chinese students to pursue their postgraduate study overseas so xiang yang what is your?	169 170
053 AMP4:	so Chi[na .hhh]	171

In lines 165-166, while AMP3 is narrating his own thoughts, he suddenly stops for one second, and then he finishes the sentence. His own utterance ‘*ah: study oversea*’ reminds him

that he has accidentally mentioned the key term of the second discussion topic. Then a one second pause follows, and he calls for them to move on to discuss the second topic. AMP2 immediately gives a repeat response in turn 51 (*'yeah yeah'*) to show agreement to what AMP3 has said earlier. By turn 52, AMP3 directly introduces the second discussion topic and chooses the participant for the next turn without any hesitation, so that the opening sequence is now complete. As the literature (Boden, 1994) suggests that usually it is the chair's duty to allocate the speaker's turn at the discussion, especially in a meeting. However, AMP3 who is not an assigned chair selects the next speaker. It should be noted that he does not do this in the other openings during the discussion process.

Extract 6 below shows the opening section of the third topic. This example begins with AMP1's termination remark 'ok' (in line 454) to prevent AMP4 and AMP2 from continuing their speech.

**Extract 6. AMGD\_O03**

Turn	Message	Line
178 AMP4:	I think it's better lah if you doing research [I::I: think it's ] better rather choosing course	451 452
179 AMP2:	[but do you think]	453
180 AMP1:	ok we choose the second third topic so AMP3 what is your opinion regarding to the technology making people more alienated or more close to each other	454 455 456

AMP1 did not wait for the response from the others to declare the topic transition but immediately starts to introduce the last topic. AMP1 self-selects to speak and appoints AMP3 to take the next turn. Research (Merchant, 2012:18) has shown that men in general, are more independent and unemotional in the interactions so this probably explains why AMP1 is not cognizant of AMP2's incomplete utterance.

#### 4.4.4 Sequential Structure of openings in AMGD

From Extracts 4-6, it is evident that the openings in the AMGD are not routine but the sequential structure of these openings appear to be simpler than that of the AFGD. The opening sequences can be summarised as follows and is given in Table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2 Summary of Features in Opening Sequences of AMGD

	Extract 4	Extract 5	Extract 6
1	Noticeable pause	Indication of 2 <sup>nd</sup> topic initiation	Framing: to call the listener's attention with "OK"
2	Hesitation filler: "er"	Agreement	Indication of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> topic initiation
3	Framing: to call the listener's attention with "OK"	Introduction of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> discussion topic	Introduction of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> discussion topic
4	Greeting		
5	Introduction to the first discussion topic		

The simple structure of the opening sequences suggests that male participants are straightforward in the interaction. Besides, there is a lack of laughter and small talk, and this makes them different from the female group. It is probably because men are goal-oriented in communication (Merchant, 2012). Although opening sequences in AMGD do not exactly share the same features, but they still could be generalised into a sequential structure.

The opening sequences in AMGD are presented below:

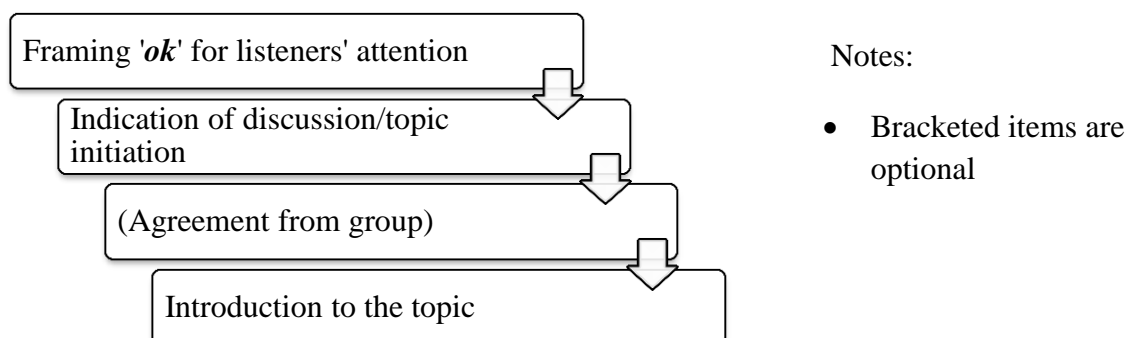


Figure 4.2 Sequential Structure of AMGD Opening

#### 4.4.5 Opening of Mixed-Group Discussion (MGD)

Extract 7 below presents an example of the opening sequence of the mixed-group discussion (henceforth MGD). It is again to be noted that the group discussions does not have an appointed chairperson.

##### Extract 7. MGD\_O01

Turn	Message	Line
	(pause 5.0)	1
001 MFP5:	<u>shall</u> we (0.5) start?	2
002 MMP5:	[yes]	3
003 MFP6:	[ok ] topic one	4
004 MMP5:	one the use of English should be given more emphasis in the Chinese educational system do you agree so M[FP5 ]	5 6
005 MFP5:	[ha? ] heh:(heh) (0.3)[ em:: ]	7 8
006 MMP5:	[what do] yo[u what do you think]	9

A five seconds pause in line 1 suggests that similar to the AMGD, no one in particular is taking up the responsibility to open the discussion. Yet there will always be one participant in the group who “volunteers” and does so throughout the interaction. In this case, MFP5 (**M**ixed-group **F**emale **P**articipant) begins with ‘*shall we start*’ (line 2) to open the sequence as a way to call attention and to see if the other participants are ready. Immediately after this, MMP5 (**M**ixed-group **M**ale **P**articipant) responds with a ‘yes’ and MFP6 with an ‘OK’ (in lines 3 & 4). All four participants are already prepared to begin but only MMP5 and MMF6 verbalise their acknowledgements to MFP5. MMP6 does not respond but the discussion takes off anyway. MMP5 then takes up the turn following MFP6’s opening of the topic (lines 5 & 6). Then he selects MFP5 to take the turn which surprises MFP5 (line7). The opening of the discussion seems to be indirect. The exchange here of a mixed-group: two males and two females differ from that found in the all-female and all-male groups. In the later sections of this chapter, the gender difference which appears to have affected the opening sequences has been discussed in more detail (see section 4.10)



A positive politeness strategy is found here at this initial part of mixed-group discussion. Within the context of the talk, the participants wait for one another to break the silence. This is probably because no one wants to act like giving an order to the others. This could also be a reflection of the Chinese communication style where they want to be “courteous”. So MFP5 who initiates the interaction satisfy the others’ positive face by saying ‘*shall we start*’. By applying positive politeness strategies, all the participants are made to feel equal thus eliminating the asymmetrical effect which often happens in group discussions if there is a leader.

The hearers: MMP5 and MFP6, occasionally overlaps their speech in lines 3 to 4, but this does not interfere with the rest of the interaction. Those enacted by MFP5 is approved by MFP6 and MMP5 and this satisfies MFP5’s positive face. However, MFP5’s face seems to be threatened directly (bald on-record) by MMP5. In lines 6 to 7, it is observed that MMP5 imposes MFP5 to take the first turn of giving her opinion, which apparently surprised MFP5. Although MMP5 might have enacted a face threatening act toward MFP5, MMP5 suggests MFP5 to take the first turn and this is understandable as it was MFP5 who broke the silence. MMP5’s expression can be regarded as a way in which he indicates his confidence with the fact that MFP5 can understand his intention without clarity. Maintaining face is not their first priority as they know each other well.

This extract provides an example of how males and females behave differently in applying the politeness principle. Males are more concerned with autonomy and detachment (Meng et. al., 2007). In the above opening sequence, MMP5 directly asks MFP5 to give her opinion in a way: ‘*so MFP5?*’ (in line 6). Females tend to be more polite (ibid) as MFP5 uses the phrase ‘*shall we start*’ to demonstrate an imperative to avoid focusing on particular members.

Extract 8 here shows how the opening sequence of the second discussion topic takes place. It begins with the framing remark “OK” to signal that there will be a change of topic at the same time, there is a call to gain the listeners’ attention.

**Extract 8. MGD\_O02**

Turn	Message	Line
058 MFP5:	ok let’s move on	119
	(pause 1.5)	120
059 MMP5:	so the second topic discuss whether it is better for Chinese students to pursue postgraduate studies overseas(1.0) so first of all I think ourselves we [are Ch]inese postgraduates study oversea(.) so do you feel anything we are different from the student how we are different we are from the Chinese study in China yes	121 122 123 124 125
060 MFP5:	[yeah ]	126

MFP5 then continues by saying ‘*let’s move on*’ as an indication of a transition to the new topic. What follows after this is a pause (line 120) which seems to suggest that the other participants agree to start the new topic. As usual, MMP5 takes on the active role of initiating the discussion, as he introduces the new topic. It is also noted that MMP5 gives his own opinion immediately after he finishes introducing the topic (line 122), which is similar to the performance of AMP1 (see Extract 4). Both male participant 1 of the AMGD and this participant (MP5 of the mixed-group) have one thing in common: being males and have voiced their views immediately after an opening sequence. (See extract 4 in p51). As in the AFGD, the participant who introduces the topic does not immediately self-select to give her own opinion. The difference in gender could have contributed to this differing strategy of interaction patterns, and this again has been discussed in a later section of this chapter (see section 4.10).

Extract 9 as given below demonstrates the opening sequence for the third discussion topic. It is observed that MFP5 indicates the change of topic like before, but she uses a shorter form in line 234 with ‘*ok next yeah*’. The opening sequences in this MGD seem to be collaboratively

enacted by MFP5 and MMP5, a phenomenon which repeatedly occurs in the discussion. The other opening sequences from the earlier analysis of the AFGD and AMGD do not show this pattern.

#### **Extract 9. MGD\_O03**

<b>Turn</b>	<b>Message</b>	<b>Line</b>
118 MFP5:	ok next yeah	234
119 MMP5:	yeah last topic is technology making people more I don't know how to read this word	235 236
120 MFP5:	(giggles)	237
121 MMP5:	alienated is it?	238
122 MFP5:	I:: I think so	239
123 MMP5:	yes all right so for me personally I total agree with this point	240

Here the opening sequence is slightly different. In turn 119, MMP5 starts introducing the topic but as he is doing so, he stumbles on a word which he cannot pronounce confidently; the word '*alienated*' (line 238). However, MFP5 giggles and she does not seem to offer any help to MMP5 with the pronunciation. Interestingly it is later observed that MFP5 also does not know how to pronounce that word. MMP5 tries to read the word and asks for MFP5's opinion. Then he gets a hesitant reply from MFP5 but she chooses to answer in a less direct way '*I:: I think so*'. Following that, MMP5's utterances '*all right*' and '*so*' indicate the completion of the opening sequence and the continuation of the talk as MMP5 offer his views.

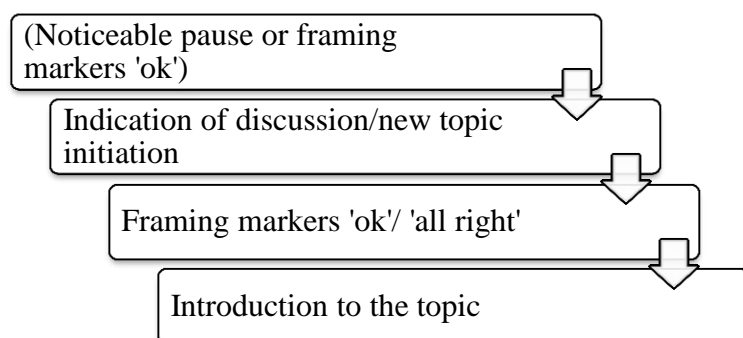
#### **4.4.6 Sequential Structure of Openings in MGD**

From Extracts 7-9, it can be seen that the opening sequences consist of framing markers 'ok' & 'all right', direct indication of topic transition, given by two of the participants. In addition, the indications of the opening sequences and topic transitions are all offered by MFP5 and the introduction to the topic is then by MMP5. Small talks do occur but noticeable pauses are not as evident as in the AFGD and AMGD. The opening sequences of the mixed group discussion can be summarised as follows and given in Table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3 Summary of Features in Opening Sequences of MGD

	<b>Extract 7</b>	<b>Extract 8</b>	<b>Extract 9</b>
<b>1</b>	Noticeable pause	Framing marker 'ok'	Framing marker 'ok'
<b>2</b>	Indication of discussion opening	Indication of 2 <sup>nd</sup> topic initiation	Indication of 3 <sup>rd</sup> topic initiation
<b>3</b>	Discourse marker 'Yes'	Noticeable pause	Introduction to the 3 <sup>rd</sup> topic
<b>4</b>	Framing marker 'OK'	Framing marker 'so'	Small talks
<b>5</b>	Introduction to the 1 <sup>st</sup> topic	Introduction to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> topic	Framing marker 'all right'

Thus the opening sequences in the MGD may be generalised by the following sequence and shown in Figure 4.2 below:



Notes:

- Bracketed items are optional
- Framing markers normally applied to call for all participants' attention of a topic initiation or as an agreement

Figure 4.3 Sequential Structure of MGD Opening

#### 4.4.7 Summary of Findings of Openings

To sum up, the above section has provided a description of the opening sequences in the three group discussions. Discussion openings in these three groups seem to be distinctive. On the basis of the above analysis, this study is not able to provide concrete conclusions but may provide some general inconclusive remarks on the sequential structure for the opening sequences of group oral interactions among Chinese speakers of English. Overall, the opening sequences performed by these three groups are rather straightforward. It may be concluded that there is a noticeable pause prior to the 'official' opening sequences. Besides

that, the appearance of small talk, and laughter among the participants, indicate that openings of the first discussion topic is not as smooth flowing but this may go to show that the first topic is a warm up among the participants as they are not familiar to each other. The small talk and laughter is an effort to camaraderie and as the discussion proceeds they appear to be more at ease. Another factor observed is since there is no one assigned to chair the discussions, there is some of uncertainty in the opening sequences, especially for the first topic.

On the whole, there are four outstanding features evident from the data analysed above. Firstly, it is obvious that the turn lengths in the openings are short. The openings are straightforward especially in the AMGD, and they are accomplished in less than 10 turns. Secondly, noticeable pauses occur in all three groups, and more in the AFGD. Besides, the topic initiators in all three groups show their preference for the use of the framing marker 'OK' to get the group members' attention. Moreover, although there is no appointed chairperson, each group appears to have a participant who feels responsible to introduce the topic introduction, except in Extract 5 (p53).

Table 4.4 below provides a summary of the common features found occurring in all three groups and is given below. While the AFGD and AMGD have a few features in common, they each have 3 and 4 features which are not common: in AFGD there is no greeting, hesitation fillers or use of 'yes'. In the AMGD there is absence of small talk, laughter, insertion sequence and 'yes'. However in the MGD, only 2 features are absent: greeting and insertion sequence. It is interesting to note that there are many common features among the 3 groups. The use of pauses, the introduction to the topics, and indication of topic transition, the use of marker 'OK' are common throughout the 3 groups.

Table 4.4 Features in Opening Sequences of Group Discussions

	All-female group	All-male group	Mixed group
Noticeable pause	√	√	√
Introducing to the topic	√	√	√
Indication of new topic initiation	√	√	√
Small talks	√		√
Laughter	√		√
Framing marker 'OK'	√	√	√
Greeting		√	
Insertion sequence	√		
Hesitation filler 'er'/ 'em'		√	√
'Yes'			√

#### 4.5 Closings in General

Face-to-face closing has at least the following general characteristics in common (Stenstrom1994:166):

Items like *right*, *alright* and *OK* or *thanks* are pre-closing signals.

The adjacency-pair format for pre-closings, closings, 'thanks' and 'goodbyes'.

The speaker usually initiates the closing section and the goodbye exchange.

However, not all forms of spoken discourse correspond to this pattern entirely. Most closing sequences consist of more than one phrase before the interaction is about to close. And sometimes the face-to-face situation may require more closing techniques. Therefore, closings are usually much longer than openings, containing pre-closing sequences (Coronel-Molina, 1998:53). Schegloff and Sacks (1973) describe various stages of closings. A pre-closing is a pre-sequence and is signalled with markers like *OK*, *alright*, *so* and *well*, indicating that the end of a conversation is near. It provides opportunity for the discussion of any additional remaining topic before the participants proceed with the closing sequence. Then when all the participants agree to close, followed by a closing section, there is then a complete close. An example of this is given below which is taken from Akmajian (2001:391).

### ***Pre-closing***

We-all, it's been nice talking to you...

Say hello to Joan for me.

### ***Closing***

See you.

Goodbye. Bye-bye. Bye. Cheerio. Ciao.

As in the literature on openings, a great amount of the literature on closings is also taken from studies on telephone conversations, such as those carried out by Schegloff and Sacks (1973), Coronel-Molina (1998), and Arminen (2005). Schegloff and Sacks (1973) comment that a conversation is brought to the close, not suddenly be closed. Closings usually will have varying patterns and may not be concluded with a sequential structure.

In the following section, the analysis of closings in the oral interactions by Chinese speakers of English in a tertiary environment will be discussed. Since the main interest of this study is oral interaction, the literature on telephone conversation will not be examined in detail here. This chapter turns now to analysis of the data which will look into the closing sequences of the group discussions.

## **4.6 Descriptions of Group Discussion Closings**

### **4.6.1 Closing of All-Female Group Discussion (AFGD)**

The first example of a closing sequence appears at the end of the first discussion topic in this AFGD.

#### **Extract 10. AFGD\_C01**

<b>Turn</b>	<b>Message</b>	<b>Line</b>
044 AFP1:	so emphasis the Chinese so as the Chinese if we learn English so much we will forget how to speak Chinese very well.	107 108
045 AFP3:	yes(.) [sometimes]	109
046 AFP1:	[so .hhh ] I don't know ((hehe:))	110
047 AFP3:	that's good(.) ok let's move to the second one(.) whether it is better for Chinese students to pursue postgraduate studies overseas	111 112

Where there is an overlapping talk in lines 109 and 110, AFP1 said ‘*so .hhh*’, indicating that she has nothing more to add. But she still provides a short response to AFP3. Then AFP3 proceeds to give a brief evaluation ‘*that’s good*’ as a way to close the exchange. According to Maynard’s (1993, cited in Otani, 2006) study on topic change strategy, AFP3 is implying an intention to close the topic by give an evaluation to the preceding utterances of AFP1. Note that AFP3 neither asks the others whether they wanted to end this topic nor does she officially announce the end. She simply uses ‘*ok*’ as a terminal signal of the first discussion topic. Similarly, in the closing sequence of the second topic, an evaluation (in line 290, extract 11) prompts the end to the second topic discussion.

**Extract 11. AFGD\_C02**

Turn	Message	Line
125 AFP2:	yeah(.) of course	289
126 AFP3:	wah:: that’s good(.)[next one]	290
127 AFP1:	[where ] where are we now	291
	((all laugh 1.5))	292

After AFP3 provides the evaluation to AFP2’s point, she directly indicates ‘*next one*’ as the declaration of close the first topic. Where there is an overlapping talk in lines 290 and 291, AFP1 said ‘*where where are we now*’ implies that she want to close the exchange as well and then AFP1’s ‘lost’ cause a laughter.

Extract 12 shows the final closing sequence of the AFGD. It is longer than the rest, with 27 turns. It is slightly different from the previous two closing sequences. The discussion seems almost to reach a close but at that point (lines 369, 370) AFP1 offers some more information based on the last topic (show in the extract 12 below, lines 371-410). The laughter noted in line 292(extract 11) once again shows the camaraderie of the female speakers, a feature which marks the gender factor. More of these are evident in in lines 365, 366 & 411.



The first pre-closing signal ‘*done*’ (line 367) is offered by AFP3 which indicates her intention to end the discussion; and is followed by a 5-second pause (line 368). The pause appears to allow time for others to talk but no one attempted it. At this point it appears that the participants do not intend to bring up any new ideas on the last discussion topic. But even as the topic is about to close, AFP1 shares an article she has read before which is related to the topic they are discussing. In this incident AFP3’s attempt to close the topic is aborted. What follows is a longer sequence of talk that may not be directly related to the topic and yet in order to save the face of AFP1, AFP3 prolonged into some small talk which takes up 40 lines. This is a pre-closing.

#### **Extract 12. AFGD\_C03**

Context: the discussion on the last topic is about to end.

<b>Turn</b>	<b>Message</b>	<b>Line</b>
166 AFP1:	that’s right(.) but I don’t have children so I::can (image) it	364
167 AFP3:	haha..	365
	((all laugh 2.0))	366
168 AFP3:	yes:: done?	367
	(pause 5.0)	368
169 AFP3:	OK.	369
	(pause 3.0)	370
170 AFP1:	when we talk about these topic(.) and I have a great article from our scholar MoYan he’s the Nobel not Nobel:	371 372
171 AFP3:	yes Nobel prize	373
....	.....	...
....	.....	...
189 AFP1:	because our generation have very special [(1.5)] period that we go through the very big change	406 407
190 AFP4:	[yes ]	408
191 AFP1:	it creates the technology so it’s very important for us to have the clear mind how to lead the future generation our children	409 410
	((all laugh 2.0))	411
192 AFP1:	yeah	412
193 AFP3:	that’s good ok	413

AFP1 finally closes her own topic (line 412) with ‘*yeah*’, which serves as the same function as the transitional marker ‘*yes*’ by AFP3 in line 367. AFP3 then takes up the turn to close the discussion in line 413.

#### 4.6.2 Sequential Structure of Closings in AFGD

From the 3 extracts above, it is found that that the same person (AFP3) choose to close the topics. She also initiates the next step in the procedure, which is the opening of the next topic. There is no clear boundary between closing and opening at the topic change points. But the pattern of closings is quite unique. The closing sequences of the AFGD can be summarised as follows and is shown in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5 Summary of Features in Closing Sequences of AFGD

Extract 10		Extract 11	Extract 12
1	Pre-closing signal ‘so’	Evaluation	Laughter
2	Evaluation		Pre-closing signal ‘done’
3	Transitional marker ‘ok’		Noticeable pause
4			Terminal marker ‘ok’
5			Insertion sequences
6			Evaluation
7			Terminal marker ‘ok’

The examples demonstrate that the closing sequences in AFGD containing some same components: the exchange structure is simple although the patterns are similarly consisting of an evaluation ‘*that’s good*’ and a terminal/ transitional marker ‘*ok*’. But except for those unplanned small talk in the final closing sequence, the whole closing sequence is simple. The sequential structure can be generalised as follows:

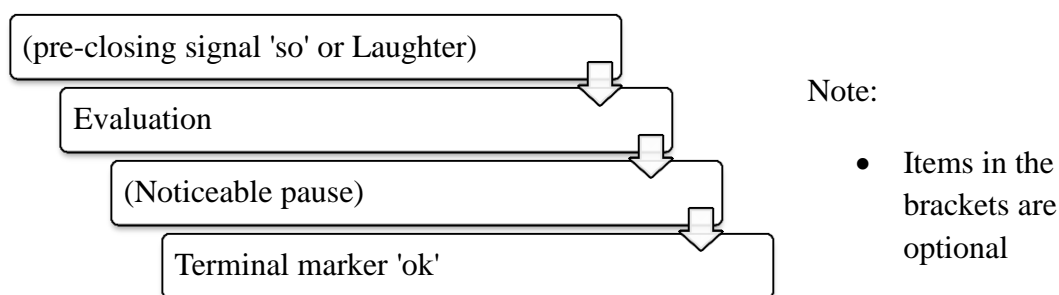


Figure 4.4 Sequential Structure of AFGD Closing

### 4.6.3 Closings of All-Male Group Discussion (AMGD)

Extract 13 presents an example of a missing closing section at the topic change point. This is not a common phenomenon but it apparently occurred rather unexpectedly. It is at the point of a topic change when AMP3 makes a sudden decision to move on to the second topic. Why this is done is not clear but in naturally occurring talk, such instances do take place because the speech is unplanned and takes place spontaneously.

#### Extract 13. AMGD\_C01

Turn	Message	Line
049 AMP2:	but somet[ime ] sometimes you need to know advantages of:	163
050 AMP3:	[yes ] not for every people but I think the more emphasis should be given to those want to study (1.0) ah:: study overseas (1.0) let's discussion the second topic	164 165 166 167
051 AMP2:	yeah yeah	168

In comparison, the closing of sequence of the second topic differs from this exchange. In Extract 13, AMP3 made a shift in the topic suddenly. Here in Extract 14, AMP1 who is noted to be the most talkative participant also assumes the role of the chair. He initiates a close to the second topic by asking whether the other participants intend to end the discussion, or by officially announcing the end. In what follows, as indicated in the extract 14, AMP2 and AMP4 are still engaged in the exchange and offering their opinion. AMP1 makes an insertion turn ('*time is too long*' in line 450), to give a signal a close but indirectly. He offers the view

that the topic has been exhausted so there is no need to continue. It is a strategy called the imperative to end (Coppock, 2005), which implies that this topic should be ended. However, AMP4 and AMP2 seem to have ignored his call to close and continue their talk. AMP1 does not state directly his intention to wait until they finish. Instead he says ‘*ok*’ (line 454), again signalling a close, as soon as AMP4’s utterance ends. Note also that AMP1 uses laughter, probably as a means to save his own face and the others’, using the strategy to deflect his seeming authority of ordering them to end the discussion.

#### **Extract 14 AMGD\_C02**

<b>Turn</b>	<b>Message</b>	<b>Line</b>
175 AMP2:	but do you think it can apply or not if you do you are doing your coursework	446 447
	(pause 1.5)	448
176 AMP4:	I think .hhh	449
177 AMP1:	time is too long ((laugh))	450
178 AMP4:	I think it’s better lah if you doing research [I::I: think it’s ] better rather choosing course	451 452
179 AMP2:	[but do you think]	453
180 AMP1:	ok we choose the second, third topic so AMGP3 what is your opinion regarding to the technology making people more alienated or more close to each other	454 455 456

The third segment below (Extract 15) shows the closing of AMGD for the last topic of discussion. It is different from the other two previous closings (Extracts 13 & 14).

#### **Extract 15. AMGD\_C03**

<b>Turn</b>	<b>Message</b>	<b>Line</b>
211 AMP1:	the hand writing you know ( ) we shouldn’t lose our identity because of the western world(.)You know the software all the software all the internet skill is from the western world but we shouldn’t lose our own identity shouldn’t lose ourselves (1.5) so that’s why we need to use the technology more comprehensively shouldn’t let the technology use us	547 548 549 550 551 552
	(pause 3.0)	553
212 AMP2:	finish? (3.0) ok finish	554
213 AMP1:	ok let’s finish our discussion I think we have talked very comprehensively regarding to these topics we show our opinions. So it’s very good thank you	555 556 557
214 All:	thank you	558

After a long turn by AMP1, there is a 3 second pause (line 553), which implies that none of the other participants wants to take up a turn to offer their opinion at this point. It therefore suggests a pre-closing sequence, and then AMP2 speaks up to say that the topic has been covered and he asks AMP1 if he has finished with this point. With another 3 second pause, and again none of the participants indicating their desire to take up a turn, participant AMP2 confirms the end of the discussion, thus signalling the group to end the talk at this point. As mentioned earlier, AMP1 has assumed the role of chairperson in this group voluntarily and he therefore takes the initiative to give a short summary to the whole discussion (lines 555-556). This observation shows a marked difference between the male and female group: AMP1 closes the exchange with an evaluation as well as an appreciation '*so it's very good thank you*', while in the AFGD a simple marker '*ok*' was employed by AFP3 (see extract 12, line 413 in p65). Meanwhile, the other participants in the AMGD offer their appreciation of having this discussion together by ending with a '*thank you*' (line 558).

In line 554 of Extract 15, a bald-on-record strategy is used by the participant, AMP2, who directly asks the other participants, '*finish?*'. He does not seem to show a willingness to avoid an offensive feeling from the other participants. It is probably male is not highly sensitive to other people's face needs. Females, on the other hand, may be more aware and sensitive as evident from the exchanges found in the same-gender group. Yet males are more likely to show cooperation instead of taking another member's directive as an offence. In response to AMP2's seemingly impolite statement, there is a short summary together with a positive comment (lines 555-557). This indicates that the discussion has been smooth and therefore complete. A positive comment ('*it's very good*') is a most frequently used conversation ending strategy, which states or implies that the conversation is enjoyable (Coppock, 2005). At the end, the members of the group does not show annoyance, instead they show

compliment by thanking one another. According to researchers who study compliments, these are often used as positive politeness strategies, and to express solidarity between the interlocutors (Al-Azzawi, 2011; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973).

#### 4.6.4 Sequential Structure of Closings in AMGD

The discussion of the AMGD demonstrates a few similarities in the opening sequence, while the closings appear unique in some aspects. The male group closes the discussion using a simpler sequential structure, compared with the female group. While the closing of male group discussion contain a brief summary and appreciation, these features are not evident in the female group discussion. Thus, the three closing sequences are different from those used by the female group. As summarised below in Table 4.6, it appears that no particular pattern contributes to the closing sequential structure.

Table 4.6 Summary of Features in Closing Sequences of AMGD

	Extract 13	Extract 14	Extract 15
1	None	Indication of topic closing	Noticeable pause
2		Insertion sequence	Indication of closing
3		Declaration of topic closing with terminal marker 'ok'	Noticeable pause
4			Confirmation of discussion closing
5			Declaration of discussion closing with terminal marker 'ok'
6			Expressing of appreciation

A potential sequential structure of the closing sequences in all-male group discussion is:

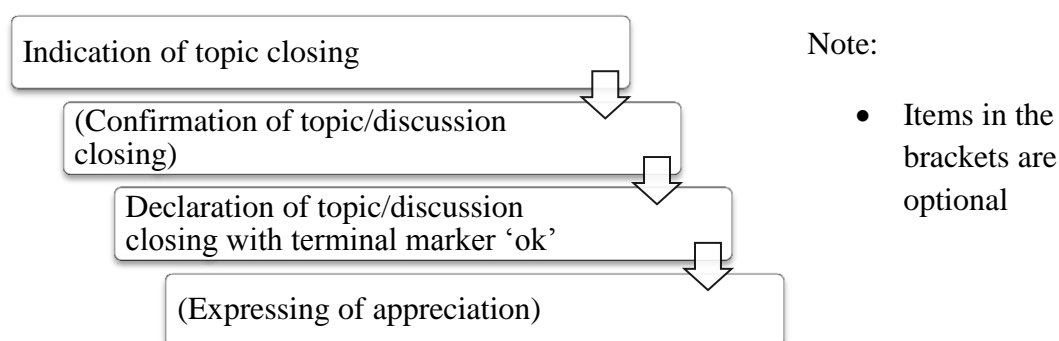


Figure 4.5 Sequential Structure of AMGD Closing

A third set of closing sequences are taken from the mixed-group discussion. It is not as long as the final closing sequences of the female group, but it has more exchanges than the closing sequence of the all-male group discussion.

#### 4.6.5 Closing Sequence of Mixed-group Discussion (MGD)

In the MGD, the closing sequences appear more complicated than the homogenous groups. Extract 16 presents the first closing with MFP5 just finishing her turn in line 9, and MFP6 expresses her agreement with ‘*yeah*’ (line 107). This is then followed by MMP5 who echoes what MFP6 says (‘*yeah*’) and closes the discussion of the first topic with the terminal marker ‘*alright*’ (line 107). MMP5 does not officially announce the end of the discussion, rather he checks on the groups’ intention to end by asking, ‘*so any more ideas er:: for this topic*’ before he signals a call to end, with ‘*so shall we move on*’ (line 108). Meanwhile, the overlapping talk also indicates that MFP5 confirms the transition of the topic (lines 109- 110) which is similar to what MMP5 says.

#### Extract 16. MGD\_C01

Turn	Message	Line
049 MFP5:	[use English the world] is connecting and the media is English for co[mmunicate]	104 105
050 MFP6:	[ yeah hhh ]	106
051 MMP5:	yeah:: alright [so any] more idea [er::: for this topic so shall we] move [on? ]	107 108
052 MFP5:	[so is it] [so this is for the(0.5) move on] [yeah] we [shall ] move on	109 110
053 MFP6:	[MMP6] anything [else you] want to:: supply ‘any °	111
054 MFP5:	[M::FP2?]	112
055 MMP6:	er:: in order to you know adapts to the technology it is necess[ary it is ne]cessary to follow the step of the world	113 114
056 MFP5:	[em hm::]	115 116
057 MMP5:	yeah ok let’s move on	117
	((all laugh 2.0))	118
058 MFP5:	ok let’s move on	119
	(Pause 1.5)	120

A few turns later MMP5 puts forward the proposition to end and move on the next topic, and this is agreed by MFP5. Both of the speakers (male and female) concur on the suggestion to move on. The noticeable laughter between the turns (turn 57 to 58) shows camaraderie between them and appears to be a face-saving device.

However before this closing, MFP6 appears to be caught unaware by MFP5's interruption as the discussion on the first topic is supposed to be end (line112). Then MMP6 presents his opinion with a hesitation 'er:' at the start point. It looks like MMP6 is just about to begin a new point but does not continue as MMP5 and MFP5 sounds out a similar agreement to move on. Here is an attempt to change the topic but it is aborted. This seems to suggest that although MMP6 begins to speak up on something new, the rest of the group wants to move on and MMP6 does not take up more turns to continue, showing either he is not aggressive to push on or he complies to their request to stop here and move on to the next topic (lines 113 – 120). The closing sequence in this example is not as straightforward as the participants appear to be somewhat uncertain as to who will begin and end the discussion and this could be because there are no clear roles, especially of the chairperson, in the discussion group.

The second closing sequence found in Extract 17 is not as complicated as the first one. Extract 17 below presents the closing sequence of the second topic. It is easy to identify that this group of participants have a preference to show agreement to what the others say. After getting the approval of 'yeah' (lines 230 & 231) from MFP6, MFP5 proposes to the group that they should end this topic and move on.

#### **Extract 17. MGD\_C02**

<b>Turn</b>	<b>Message</b>	<b>Line</b>
114 MMP5:	I believe still the environment here much healthi[er than China much much better] yeah	228 229
115 MFP6:	[yeah yeah	230



	yeah I can't agree] with you more yeah	231
116 MFP5:	ok let's move on	232
117 MMP5:	yeah alright alright let's move on	233
118 MFP5:	ok next yeah	234
119 MMP5:	yeah last topic is technology making people more I don't know how to read this word	235 236

The closing sequences in the mixed-group are not as straightforward as those found in the other two homogenous groups. The closings here consist of more turns. From Extract 17's closing, MFP5 signals to end the current topic (line 232), and then MMP5 gives a closing declaration '*yeah alright alright let's move on*' (line 233). MMP5 being a male appears to want to lead and the double use of '*alright*' signals certainty and firmness. But it is MFP5 who then confirms it (line 234) and uses a softening '*yeah*' to direct the discussion on (line 234). The way both males and females in this group aligns with one another in their talk show how they are unconsciously aware of using face saving devices.

Extract 18 presents the closing sequence of the whole discussion, and is different from the previous two closing segments.

#### **Extract 18. MGD\_C03**

<b>Turn</b>	<b>Message</b>	<b>Line</b>
176 MFP5:	even though it's very boring thing	316
177 MMP5:	yeah	317
178 MFP5:	so	318
179 MMP5:	maybe you don't even enjoy it	319
	(pause 1.5)	320
180 MFP5:	so are we get a::	321
181 MMP5:	so any more ideas?	322
182 MFP6:	emm:::no	323
183 MMP5:	so can we stop he[re? ] very nice to have [you here ]	324
184 MFP5:	[yes] [yes hehe::]	325
185 MFP6:	ah:: yeah very nice talking	326
186 MMP5:	yeah ok we make nice time byebye	327
187 MFP5 +MFP6:	bye bye	328
	(All laugh 3.0)	329

In this extract, after participant MMP5 responds to participant MFP5's speech, MFP5 uses a pre-closing marker "so" (line 318) to signal a close to the discussion. But MMP5 makes a comment based on what he and MFP5 is talking about previously (for full transcript, see Appendix VII). However, none of the other participants takes up a turn to speak, as a noticeable pause occurs (line 320). In line 321, MFP5 takes the floor and again, signalling to the rest that it is almost time to end. MMP5 seems to catch MFP5's intention here and offers a question (*'so any more ideas'*) which gets a clear 'no' from MFP6. This could have been a final closing but MMP5 rephrases his question to a rhetorical statement in line 324 (*'so can we stop here'*) and continues by giving a closing speech, which appears out of place as he is not the researcher and yet he offers an appreciation to the rest of the group. To this both females in the group accept his appreciation and even extend it. Finally the discussion ends with both the females saying 'bye bye' (line 328).

Similar with the participants of the male group, the participants here appear to present their appreciation rather profusely (line 324-326). The final closing with 'bye-bye' (lines 327 & 328) from MMP5 is similar to that used between close friends in any conversation. It is probably because participants in this group familiar with each other. They feel good to have had this cheery talk. The utterances '*very nice to have you here*' (line 324) and '*we make nice time*' (line 326) indicates that.

MMP5 then moves on to end the discussion with some positive comments (*'very nice to have you here'*, and '*we make nice time*' in lines 324 & 326), which appears to be the most frequently used conversation ending strategy (Coppock, 2005). It indicates that the discussion is appreciated and that they enjoyed it. Simultaneously the comments save the positive face of the others. Besides, MFP6 also shows her appreciation to the others (line, 326). The

pronoun ‘*we*’ appears in the closing sequences, signalling a solidarity discussion. With regard to positive politeness, the closing sequence that is performed by the male participants displays some similarities with that from the mixed-group (see Extract 15).

#### 4.6.6 Sequential Structure of Closings in MGD

On the whole, the closings in the MGD are not so straightforward because the sequence appears to begin with an indication to close and then it does not close, there are inserted sequences. It is obvious that each topic ends as expressed by the group and there is apparent call out to close. This pattern is not seen in the other two homogenous groups. Another feature is that the closing sequence which appears to be dominated by two participants (MP5 & MP6) in mixed group discussion. They collaborative declare and confirm the end of the discussion. The closing sequence of extracts 16-18 is summarized in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7 Summary of Features in Closing Sequences of MGD

	<b>Extract 16</b>	<b>Extract 17</b>	<b>Extract 18</b>
<b>1</b>	Transitional marker ‘alright’	Explicit indication of topic close	Noticeable pause
<b>2</b>	Indication of end the topic	Approval & declaration of topic close	Implicit closing signal ‘so’
<b>3</b>	Confirm the group intention of topic close	Confirmation of topic close with terminal marker ‘ok’	Inserted sequences
<b>4</b>	Declaration of topic close with terminal marker ‘ok’		Implicit indicate to end the discussion
<b>5</b>	Inserted sequences		Confirm the group intention of discussion closure
<b>6</b>	Declaration of topic close with terminal marker ‘ok’		Approval from the group
<b>7</b>	Laughter		Explicit indicate of discussion end
<b>8</b>	Confirmation of topic close		Expression of solidarity & appreciation
<b>9</b>			Declaration of discussion closure
<b>10</b>			Terminal exchanges ‘bye’

According to this summary, the sequential structure of closing sequences in mixed-group discussion can be generalised as follow:

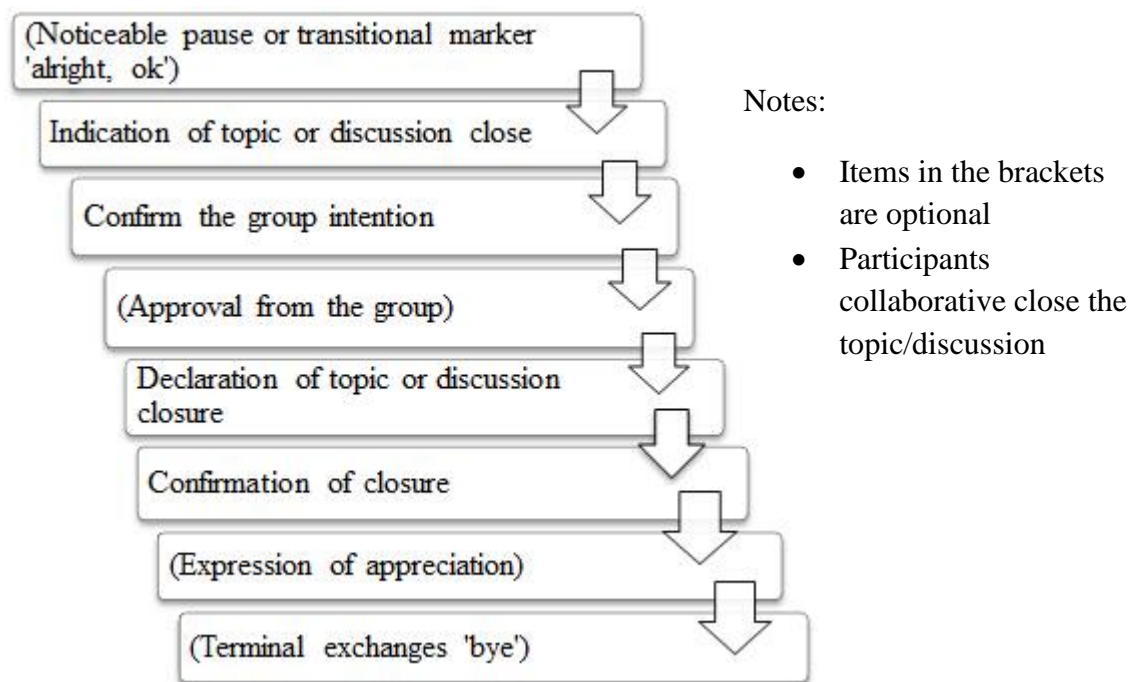


Figure 4.6 Sequential Structure of MGD Closing

#### 4.6.7 Summary of Finding of Closings

To sum up, the above section has described the closing sequences in three group discussions. The sequential structures of the closings have been presented in previous sections. The discussion closings in these group discussions seem to be unique and varied. In other words, they are not organised or structured, and are performed and expressed in different ways. Some features like noticeable pauses and laughter occur in the process. The MGD differs from the AFGD and AMGD in that the participants here tend to offer an intention to close the discussion. The other two groups were more direct in their closing sequences. The mixed-group and the all-male group are shown to use expressions of appreciation to close their discussions.

It is also observed that there are both implicit and explicit indications of topic ending and these are evident for all three groups, with the most noticeable in the mixed-group. Besides, insertion sequences have been used to delay the final closing (see Extracts 12 & Extract 16). Moreover, the terminal marker ‘*ok*’ seems to be the most preferred signal employed the Chinese speakers to declare the topic transition or closure. To sum up, the features in the closing sequences of the discussions are presented in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8 Features in Closing Sequences of Group Discussions

	All-female group	All-male group	Mix group
Noticeable pause	√	√	√
Laughter	√		√
Pre-closing signal ‘so’/ ‘alright’	√		√
Indication of closing		√	√
Confirmation of closing intention of group		√	√
Declaration of closing		√	√
Terminal marker ‘ok’	√	√	√
Terminal exchange ‘bye’			√
Evaluation	√		
Expression of appreciation		√	√
Insertion sequences	√	√	√

Table 4.8 above provides a summary of the common features found occurring in all three groups. While the AFGD and AMGD have three features in common which are: noticeable pause, insertion sequences and use of terminal marker ‘*ok*’. In the AMGD there is absence of expression of appreciation, indication/confirmation and declaration of closing. In the AMGD there is absence of laughter, pre-closing signal and evaluation. However in the MGD, only 1 feature is absent: evaluation. It is interesting to note that there are few common features

among the 3 groups. The use of pauses, the insertion sequences, and the use of marker ‘OK’ are common throughout the 3 groups.

#### **4.7 The Reflection of Chinese Cultural Values in Group Discussion**

Chinese people are living in collectivism-oriented culture so that the characteristics of collectivism are supposedly found in their group interaction behaviour. Based on the characteristics of collectivism that are posed in Hofstede’s (2011) study, the findings of the current study show that the performances of the Chinese speakers did not reflect Hofstede’s comments. Firstly, individualism suggests that the word ‘I’ is indispensable in language use. Within all the group discussions, almost all participants present their own opinion with ‘*I think*’. ‘I’ consciousness appear throughout the sequences, and the collectivism feature ‘we’ only appear in the opening and closing sequences. The individuals maintain their identity in the group and yet when they open or close sequences, these individuals employ “we” to show collectivism. The virtue of harmony seems to be maintained as in collectivism society, and it can be seen that relationships prevail over tasks. It is interesting that the participants consider relationship above task, and this is seen even when there were arguments and interruptions during the discussion, especially in all-male group. It may be concluded Hofstede’s dimension of collectivism is not adequate enough to describe the findings here.

There are two frameworks (Gao, 1998 & Lewis, 2006) presented in Chapter Two, which explain communication characteristics. The frameworks were employed in two studies which drew conclusions regarding the Chinese cultural values’ impact on the interaction of Chinese speakers of English. Since Gao’s framework describe Chinese communication characteristics, it is applied in this section to provide a guideline for understanding the Chinese communication characteristics in group discussions. In Chapter Two, a more detailed description has been provided (see Chapter Two). Hence, in the following section will focus

on the analysis of the findings. The answer is given for the question on whether these five features can be identified in the opening and closing sequences of their discussion.

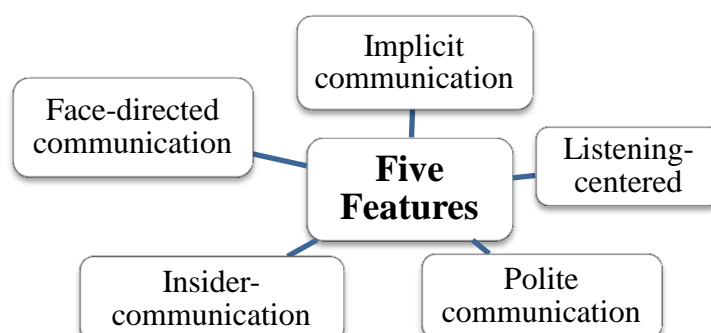


Figure 4.7 Gao's Framework of Chinese Communication Characteristic

#### 4.7.1 Polite Communication

Polite communication in this framework refers to interlocutors who are modest and courteous in their speech. Previous studies by researches like Lakoff (1975), and Nemati (2007) suggest that women agreed more politely, particularly by way of using the right language forms. According to Gu (1990), the Chinese way of politeness indicates are: be respectful by showing appreciation, modesty, and avoiding offensive behaviour. Extract 15 below highlights one example where it could be perceived as polite communication.

#### Extract 15. AMGD\_C03

Turn	Message	Line
211 AMP1:	..... identity shouldn't lose ourselves (1.5) so that's why we need to use the technology more comprehensively shouldn't let the technology use us	550 551 552
	(pause 3.0)	553
212 AMP2:	finish? (3.0) ok finish	554
213 AMP1:	ok let's finish our discussion I think we have talked very comprehensively regarding to these topics we show our opinions. So it's very good thank you	555 556 557
214 All:	thank you	558

In the AMGD, laughter did not occur as frequently as found in the other two groups, and they also seem to differ more in their opinions. However, at the end of the discussion, the all males group still perform politeness in their interaction. Firstly, with two noticeable pauses, it could be interpreted as a signal to wait for the supplementary opinion of the others in the group, and it also shows that opinions are still predetermined by the members and this is a collectivism-oriented feature. Then the assumed chairperson (AMP1) provides an evaluation to their discussion (lines 555 - 556) and expresses his appreciation (line 557) and uses the “we” consciousness as well. Both all-male and the mixed groups end their discussion with an expression of thanks for conversation. All-male group participants say ‘*thank you*’ to each other (line 558). Mixed group participants express their appreciations with the phrases ‘have a nice talk’/ ‘nice time’ (extract 18) at the end of the discussion. However, the phenomenon of showing admiration/appreciation does not occur in the all-female group.

#### 4.7.2 Implicit and Polite Communication

There is more than one communication characteristic found in a segment of talk. Extract 18 below is a closing sequence containing two cultural features: implicit and polite communication. It refers to a mode of communication which is indirect and courteous. How one does implicit communication is not to spell out everything and yet the others may get the point. Besides, expression of appreciation among interlocutors is a way of showing good manners, and a means to approve self and the other’s face. Thus, just like what Karimipour et al., (2013)’s posit on how the interlocutors close the conversation friendly, by which techniques need to be applied to end the conversation ending.

##### Extract 18. MGD\_C03

Turn	Message	Line
176 MFP5:	even though it’s very boring thing	316
177 MMP5:	yeah	317
178 MFP5:	so	318



179 MMP5:	maybe you don't even enjoy it	319
	(pause 1.5)	320
180 MFP5:	so are we get a::	321
181 MMP5:	so any more ideas?	322
182 MFP6:	emm::no	323
183 MMP5:	so can we stop he[re? ] very nice to have [you here ]	324
184 MFP5:	[yes] [yes hehe::]	325
185 MFP6:	ah:: yeah very nice talking	326
186 MMP5:	yeah ok we make nice time byebye	327
187 MFP5 +MFP6:	bye bye	328
	(All laugh 3.0)	329

Seen from Extract 18, in line 318 is an implicit pre-closing signal. After the insertion sequence (line 319 - 320) comes the initiation of a closing indication ‘*so are we get a:*’. It is an incomplete sentence but it is comprehended by the other participants that MFP5 is expressing his intention to end the discussion. But they do not appear to terminate the interaction, instead they start with an expression of their appreciation. Except for MMP6 who listens most of the time, the other three participants react to this utterance. The characteristic of collectivism of using “we” consciousness is applied through the closing sequence. Meanwhile, being polite and indirect is the characteristic of a reactive culture based on Lewis’ model (2008). However, this is the only example that contains two features from all the data collected from the 3 group discussions.

Implicit speech is rarely found in the data. Only some of the female participants could be found using implicit speech in their utterances, for example: ‘*that’s good points actually I am thinking er: maybe the other situation is...*’ which is uttered by AFP1 (see Appendix V AFGD, turn 039). Instead of saying ‘*yes*’ or ‘*no*’ to give a judgement, AFP1 shows appreciation to the prior speaker’s point. This is a tactful focus transition without threatening the other’s face. It could be said that women apply interaction strategy better than men and the feature of implicitness still remains.

### 4.7.3 Listening-centered Communication

Listening-centered is also an outstanding communication characteristic among the Chinese (Lewis, 2008). According to Abu Baker (2008), the Chinese have a rule states that interpersonal communication is governed by the elders. It is one of the principles which originates from Confucianism, and remains effective in China today. A child raised in the collectivism-oriented Chinese society needs to follow good behavioural norms, where the one who is quiet will be considered more respectful than the one who speaks up (Xu, 2008). In addition, the Chinese hesitate to express their opinions freely as they are concerned about being an opinionated person.

#### Extract 4. AMGD\_001

Turn	Message	Line
	(pause 5.5)	1
001 AMP1:	er:: ok hello, guys(.) I think today we have talk about some important	2
	issues related to English language proficiency (.) you know there is a	3
	question that try to ask us whether more emphasis should be given to	4
	the English language in our Chinese educational system (.) I think it's	5
	very important because you know.....	6

#### Extract 7. MGD\_001

Turn	Message	Line
	(pause 5.0)	1
001 MFP5:	<u>shall</u> we (0.5) start?	2
002 MMP5:	[yes]	3
003 MFP6:	[ok ] topic one	4

In the two extracts above, there is a noticeable pause before the participants start to talk. The video recordings of these discussions clearly demonstrate that the participants do make some eye contact, indicating that they are waiting on one another to open the discussion. Those who keep silent appear to be reading the task given to them on paper. The pause could be because they are either thinking or they are just waiting for someone to speak up. Where speaking is concerned, the norm in Chinese communication is that it is better to listen than to speak (Fang & Faure, 2011). This phenomenon also explains the reason why the Chinese

have a tendency to remain silent in classroom and seminars, unlike the students from Western cultures (Jin & Cortazzi, 1996a cited in Li & Nesi, 2004) who are outspoken and dare to raise their questions openly.

From the findings, it appears that the most talkative or experienced person is not the oldest in the group, and that person has taken responsibility to initiate the discussion in general. They are participants: AMP1 & MFP5, who show hesitation in their utterances which suggest that their interaction is unplanned but they volunteered to initiate the discussion. By initiating they trigger the other group members to begin contributing to the discussion. From the examples cited, it appears that the impact of this cultural value does not affect the communication patterns in the groups.

#### **4.7.4 Insider-communication**

The Chinese have a tendency to be active when talking with people they know, call the insider-communication (Fang & Faure, 2011). With this embedded-ness, an insider or outsider is clearly divided by the Chinese. The most outstanding differentiation is the insider who engages highly in conversation as compared with the one who rarely speaks to outsiders. The participants who took part in this study are not close friends; some of them probably know each other for some time while some are mere acquaintances. However, as postgraduate students they do spend quite a lot of time together as they belong to a close knit community (especially those who study at UM), and the fact that they are from the same country, they often gather together for social functions. Hence they can be considered as insiders.

### Extract 1. AFGD\_O01

Turns	Message	Line
001 AFP2:	<i>zan kai shi ba</i> let's begin	1
002 Researcher:	<i>sheng yin shao wei da yi dian OK</i> please speak a little bit louder OK	2
003 AFP2:	<i>na ni de recorder zai naer ne</i> so where is your recorder	3
004 AFP3:	here, hahaha...((point to the recorder))	4
005 AFP2:	ah::	5
006 AFP1:	<i>ni dui zhe recorder shuo le ban tian le</i> you have been talking to the recorder all along	6
	((all laugh 2.0))	7
007 AFP3:	I will help you	8
	(pause 2.0)	9
008 AFP3:	first one do you that we should emphasis English in the Chinese educational system	10 11
	((all laugh 3.0))	12

Insider communication seems most prominent in the AFGD. Extract 1 is the opening sequence of their group discussion. Unlike the other two groups which begin with a 5-second pause, this group start engaging in the interaction from beginning. There is some amount of small talk at the beginning, but they immediately return to the main task (turn 002-008) without prolonging their session. Laughter always accompanies their interaction and their discussion was smooth. The use of the pronoun ‘we’ (line 10) by AFP3 is also a way of expressing solidarity among the insiders. Solidarity is exerted within the party membership (Fang & Faure, 2011). The following two examples present the interaction between insiders.

### Extract 3. AFGD\_O03

Turn	Message	Line
126 AFP3:	wah:: that's good(.)[next one]	290
127 AFP1:	[where ] where are we now	291
	((all laugh 1.5))	292
128 AFP3:	Is technology making people more alienated?	293

### Extract 18. MGD\_C03

Turn	Message	Line
	(pause 1.5)	320
180 MFP5:	so are we get a::	321

181 MMP5:	so any more ideas?	322
182 MFP6:	emm:::no	323
183 MMP5:	so can we stop he[re? ] very nice to have [you here ]	324
184 MFP5:	[yes] [yes hehe:::]	325
185 MFP6:	ah:: yeah very nice talking	326
186 MMP5:	yeah ok we make nice time byebye	327

Insider-oriented in Chinese communication system is more relevant to “*guanxi*” which means “relationship” in English. It refers to people who want to get to know each other to build trust, and so they become highly involved in the interaction. Thus, families and friends are the insiders and often seek out mutual help from within. The extracts above demonstrate some segments of friends interacting cooperatively to achieve the goal of the group task.

#### 4.7.5 Face-directed Communication

Face is a key cultural value to the Chinese (Fang & Faure, 2011). The central cultural norm is harmony and this is achieved through the control of feeling and emotion, and avoidance of conflict. If this communication principle is not considered, it might cause disruption to the group’s interpersonal relationship. If this happens, it may be perceived as a face-losing behaviour in the communication. In addition, being negative should be avoided as well. Therefore, to maintain harmony in existing relationships among individuals means to maintain the “face” of the other.

There are many changes going on in Chinese society today (Fang & Faure, 2011) with regard to communication styles. People are more open to express their thoughts. It does not mean that they have ignored this norm but they are now not as strictly restricted by this ‘face’ issue. The following is an example to illustrate this ‘face’ issue. Extract 16 below is a closing sequence taken from the mixed-group discussion. The situation is when MFP5 thought that everybody has agreed to close the topic and she announced it. MFP6 interrupts her by the next turn of talk. MFP5 feels embarrassed over this and she then calls MFP6’s name with a

questioning intonation. But from her reply ‘*em hm*’ (line 115-116) to MMP6’s utterance, it suggests that she is threatened by this insertion sequence, but it does not seem to affect their relationship.

#### Extract 16. MGD\_C01

Turn	Message	Line
049 MFP5:	[use English the world] is connecting and the media is English for co[mmunicate]	104 105
050 MFP6:	[ yeah hhh ]	106
051 MMP5:	yeah:: alright [so any] more idea [er:: for this topic so shall we] move [on? ]	107 108
052 MFP5:	[so is it] [so this is for the(0.5) move on] [yeah] we [shall ] move on	109 110
053 MFP6:	[MMP6 ] anything [else you] want to:: supply °any °	111
054 MFP5:	[MF::P6? ]	112
055 MMP6:	er:: in order to you know adapts to the technology it is necess[ary it is nece]ssary to follow the step of the world	113 114
056 MFP5:	[em hm:::]	115 116

Another example is the closing sequence of AMGD. In Extract 15 below, when AMP1 just finishes his talk, everybody keeps silent and this suggests that they do not have anything else to add. Then AMP2 says ‘*finish?*’, which appears to be a potentially threatening face act. For the Chinese, it is perceived as questioning whether one has spoken enough or not, but it may have threatened hearer’s positive face. However, AMP1 does not appear to be embarrassed by AMP2 and brings the topic to a close when he says ‘*finish?*’ in extract 15 (line 554).

#### Extract 15. AMGD\_C03

Turn	Message	Line
211 AMP1:	..... so that’s why we need to use the technology more comprehensively shouldn’t let the technology use us	... 551 552
	(pause 3.0)	553
212 AMP2:	finish? (3.0) ok finish	554
213 AMP1:	ok let’s finish our discussion I think we have talked very comprehensively regarding to these topics we show our opinions. So it’s very good thank you	555 556 557
214 All:	thank you	558

Hence, an open style of communication among the Chinese is seen here as a move towards more openness. The two examples above illustrate face-undirected communication. The cultural norms have an important impact on the interaction style of Chinese. However, these inappropriate behaviours will not be perceived as face-losing in communication any more. Not only cultural values but also the gender issue will have an impact on the interaction style. So in the following section, the gender issue will be brought in to analysis the interactional style of Chinese speakers of English.

#### **4.8 Gender Differences and Similarities in Interactional Behaviour**

As it is mentioned in chapter two, males and females behave differently when they are interacting in homogenous or heterogeneous groups. In this section a description of how gender affects the turn-taking system, interruptions and overlaps in the three group discussions are presented.

It has been found that some people find it difficult to open a conversation; others on the other hand, find it difficult to end a conversation (David & Kuang, 2012). Hence, a participant in an interaction not only needs to consider the control of the exchange of the conversation to the point of closing, but also needs to consider the aspect of how it is closed. There is varying degrees to which participants contribute to a discussion and to the management of a discussion in unplanned spoken discourse. In some conversations, for instance, in closing there are usually several turns during which the speakers may check with each other in the group whether they have anything further to say. If one participant were to end a conversation abruptly, this may seem to be inappropriate or rude.

In some occasions, some specific interaction strategies are used by the interlocutors. A recent study by Qian (2010) found that Chinese females could apply conversation strategies better than the males. The study also revealed that there is a high level of involvement in the discussion among the participants. The current study has also shown from the transcriptions that some features of high involvement occur and these will be discussed in the following section.

#### **4.8.1 Turn-taking and Turn-length**

It is found that although males tend to control the turn to talk especially when they want to offer their opinion, the males in the AMGD listens to the others before they make their own stance. The findings show that at the beginning of each topic discussion, the male participants self-select to give their own opinion, with the hedge '*I think*' to initiate their utterances by turns. After that, they start reacting to the others' speech and self-select to take the next turn most of the time because they want to show their disagreement. It is interesting to find that unlike Qian's (2010) claims which say that the Chinese males are self-centred, and prefer to dominate communication, the male participants in this study are self-centred in some way, but they do not dominate the discussion.

In the whole discussion process, the assumed chairperson AMP1 manages the turn-taking system by providing the members opportunities to give their own opinion. He either applies a question to select the next speaker or he names the speaker ('*so AMP3 what is your opinion*', see turn 066 of AMGD in Appendix VI) or signal the next speaker he selects with an incomplete utterance (e.g. '*yes so AMP4*', line 331). The extract below provides an example how male participants interact.



### Extract 19: AMGD\_01

Turn	Message	Line
	(pause 2.0)	293
093 AMP4:	I think the problem is the:: let me .hhh	294
094 AMP2:	you know	295
095 AMP4:	((to AMGP2)) let me finish my	296
096 AMP2:	you know the I think for most of the postgraduate study most of them are mix mode or coursework so I don't think it's good	297 298
097 AMP1:	so why are you go abroad?	299
	..... .....	
110 AMP2:	[but they ] do research <u>YES</u> they do the research	321
111 AMP1:	formally this format from format from the pattern they	322
112 AMP4:	maybe the research que[stion ]	323
113 AMP1:	[in the] real in the real situation they do[n't ]	324
114 AMP2:	[this] depends on your majo(r.) if you are an engineering student you will do the you go to the lab and do the experiments just like(.) maybe you should know how to design something how to make something but if you just do the coursework you know you just know the theory how to design hehe: [that's problem]	325 326 327 328 329 330
115 AMP1:	[yes so AMP4 ]	331

At turn 93, AMP4 self-selects as the next speaker after a 2-second pause, however at this point he notices that AMP2 is about to break the turn-taking rule, so that he says ‘*let me .hhh*’ (line 294) to AMP2 to signals AMP2 not to interrupt him. His appeal appears twice but he is ignored. AMP2 appears not to have taken notice and he does not wait, instead he continues his utterance (line 297). AMP4 attempts to stop AMP2, but the hint is not taken up. AMP2 takes up and speaks at length in the following turn (turn 96) and AMP4 appears to abort his flow of utterance till turn 112 but brings in a new point about the research question line 33, 23). Observations from the recordings (both audio and video) shows that AMP4 is not as fluent a speaker as AMP2 so when AMP2 takes an insertion sequence (turn 96) the other (AMP1) latches on his turn and offers his opinion. An exchange of ideas between AMP1 and AMP2 ensues. But it is noted that AMP4 still wants to take a chance to express his opinion (turn 112). At this point, AMP1 does not allow AMP4 to finish his utterance but he notices

that AMP4 is interrupted by him and AMP2. So after AMP2 finishes his utterance, AMP1 determines AMP4 to take the next turn (line 331 in Extract 19).

Another instance of this occurrence is when AMP1 introduces the third discussion topic. He directly appoints AMP3 to be the first one to give his own opinion (*'ok we choose the second, third topic so AMP3 what is your opinion regarding to the technology making people more alienated or more close to each other'* – see Extract 6, line 454-455 in p54). The reason could be because AMP1 realizes that AMP3 has not offered his views while the rest are busy talking about the second topic. Therefore, AMP1 as the assumed chairperson seems to claim his “right” to direct the other to speak. The overall turn-taking system of AMGD does not appear to be ordered.

In contrast, turn-taking system in AFGD is less complicated. The female participants are not as active as the male participants in the process of turn taking. Their utterances are mitigated by use of hedging, and appear to be more cooperative in their discussion. The interaction in the all-female group appears to be dominated by two persons: AFP1 and AFP3. Discussion is carried out in a relaxed manner and they seem to self-select more than the males. They are also more united as they often uses acknowledgments to each other's' utterances with *'yes, yeah, em'* (see Extracts 2 & 11) in this group, the “other-select the next speaker” phenomenon is rare.

As for the mixed-group, the turn-taking system is not as simple as that of the all-female group. The mixed-group consists of two female and two male participants and the findings show that they do not show distinct gender characters during the discussion process. Except for MMP6 who appears to be a good listener in group, the other three participants especially MMP5,

participates actively in the discussion. But this does not mean MMP5 dominates the group.

The following is an example taken from the transcription of MGD.

### Extract 20 MGD\_01

Turn	Message	Line
011 MFP5:	I think they did. They did emphasis enough nowadays but it depends on how the teacher plan er::the class er:: how do the how the le[vel of] the students	19 20 21
012 MMP5:	[yes ]	22
013 MFP5:	MMP6?	23
014 MMP5:	so do you have any idea anything you thing haven't done enough in China about the emphasis English	24 25
015 MMP6:	so most of the school they teach English in Mandarin only but in my opinion I think the English should be taught in English so we can observe we can how to say learn the language much better	26 27 28
016 MMP5:	is English really necessary in China?	29
	(pause 1.0)	30
017 MFP5:	MFP6?	31
018 MFP6:	my turn er:: ok I :: I :: think' it's essential for us to speak English better bec: but I think the current education is English teachers only .....	32 33 34

After MFP5 finishes her utterance, she selects MMP6 to be the next speaker, probably because she notices that MMP6 does not self-select to take his own turn. In MFP5's talk (line 23) she selects MMP6 by naming him, however MMP5 does not take up his turn to speak and appears to veer from the turn taking rule (lines 24-25). The reason is because MMP6 self-selects by latching on to MFP5's talk. After that, MFP5 notices there is a 1-second pause where no one takes the turn to answer MMP5's question. Then MFP5 selects MFP6 as the next speaker, as she has not presented her views yet. From MFP6's response in line 32 ('my turn er::ok'), it is noted that she is actually waiting to take her turn. Other than the example above, turn-taking by "other nomination" occurs several other times in this group. One possible reason is that they want to get MMP6 engaged in their discussion. Another turn-allocation in MGD to encourage MMP6 to talk is raised by MFP6 in the closing sequence of the first topic (see Extract 16, turn 54).

From Extract 20, it is observed that MFP5 is the active one in the mixed-group, and she interacts well with the males who are of the same social status as she is (all are postgraduate students). In other ordinary conversations among the Chinese males and females, the females are usually more passive assertive and submissive (Qian, 2010). However, here MFP5 is able to maintain the discussion as she is confident enough. She is not passive to the other speakers neither does she dominate the group interaction. Instead, she encourages those who are passive to speak up.

Overall, it is found that each group discussion has approximately 200 turns of talk, but the turn-lengths differ quite widely. Lakoff (1975) observed that in informal talk the females tend to use longer utterances than males. In this study, most short turns are distributed in the opening and closing sequences for all three group interactions. Specifically, AMGD contains a lot of long turns. The turn-length in the mixed-group is 2-3 lines on average and is slightly shorter than those in the AFGD. In the mixed-group discussion, the male participant (MMP5) produces most of the long utterances. It may be said that the finding of this study differs from Lakoff's (1975) study. An organized turn-taking system is co-ordinated which in a way minimizes overlaps and speech gaps. In the following section, overlaps and the interruptions will be explained.

#### **4.8.2 Overlapping and Interruption**

A majority of interruptions and overlaps are usually carried out by males in female-male dyads as reported by Zimmerman & West (1983), and Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin (1999). Findings from other studies there are more overlaps (i.e. simultaneous speaking) than interruptions. A calculation of the interruptions and overlaps that can be found in the group

discussions in this study is shown in Table 4.9 below. The data is to show how gender difference influence overlaps and interruptions.

Table 4.9 Frequency of Overlaps and Interruptions in Each Group Discussion

	All-female	All-male	Mixed-gender			Total
<b>Overlaps</b>	28	27	61			106
<b>Interruptions</b>	10	34	<b>M-F</b>	<b>F-M</b>	<b>F-F</b>	58
			4	7	3	

The occurrence of overlaps is particularly higher in the mixed-group than the two other homogenous groups. Seen from the data (see full transcription in Appendix VII), the overlaps in the mixed-group discussion are mainly contributed by MP5. He expends great effort to reinforce the other's talk by indicating agreement, such as 'yeah' and 'yes' during the other's utterances. Extract 21 below illustrates this.

**Extract 21 MGD\_02**

Turn	Message	Line
075 MMP5:	-yes I know those are doing in second class universities or something we have our best university Qinghua and Beijing University I believe they have better [how to say higher standard (0.3) ] yes	150 151 152 153
076 MFP5:	[yes higher educational system]	154 155
077 MMP5:	so when we look we look at the best because we ourselves [we ]study in the how to say	156 157
078 MFP5:	[yes]	158
079 MFP5:	The be[st ]University in Malaysia it's good for us	159
080 MMP5:	[yes]	160

This phenomenon also appears in the unstructured discussion of the homogenous groups. But the overlaps in the homogenous groups mostly are two speakers' simultaneous talk and the frequency of overlaps in three groups is very close.

On the other hand, the early study of (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999) claims that interruptions are uncommon in same-gender contexts but males interrupt females in mixed-gender interaction. Majority of the interruptions in this study happened in AMGD in this study. They frequently interrupt others in the discussion wherever they have disagreement to the others. There is an example containing various overlaps and interruptions taken from the AMGD text presents the interaction among three speakers.

#### Extract 22 AMGD\_02

Turn	Message	Line
011 AMP2:	so(1.0) this [is this is not the] the the the things for the communication, th[is is the one maybe for the one if you .hh]	79 80
012 AMP1:	[yes, you know ] [Yes but you mention is for Asian [China] ] because right now is the 21 <sup>st</sup> century in China	81 82 83
013 AMP2:	[if you::] but if you look at the Japan and Korean you find (1.0) they are bad at [learning English]	84 85 86
014 AMP1:	[Yeah. They are ] poor at English pro[iciency ]	87
015 AMP2:	[but [they] are(1.0) yes ]	88
016 AMP3:	[their knowledge, an]d powerful countries, they are confident on their iss[ues still enjoy enough ]	89 90 91
017 AMP2:	[yes you know there is ] no relationship between the learning and the the the learning English and the for your [(2.0) ] [yes for the country] development.	92 93 94 95
018 AMP3:	[country development] [I don't think so]	96 97
019 AMP1:	Because in my opinion learning English can make you (broad of your wiser?) that is very important. Learning English cannot lose your identity. It's very important. But I don't think that [we are using .hh ]	98 99 100
020 AMP2:	[but do you think ] that it's wasting time	101 102

The above extract shows that there are five interruptions and three overlaps in ten turns. Male participants in the same-gender group are significantly more likely than those in mixed-group to interrupt others. The first overlap in this extract occurs at turns 11 and 12. It shows that AMP1 and AMP2 coincidentally start talking together. It is possibly because there is a one second pause in AMP2's utterance (line 79) so AMP1 considers AMP2 has already ended his

turn. This could also be interpreted as an unsuccessful interruption so both speakers continue talking (turns 12-13). Both of them appear to want to complete their utterances, as observed from turn 11 to turn 15, so they interrupt each other's turn. In the meantime, at turn 16, AMP3 gets involved in AMP1 and AMP2's utterances. This could be considered as a complex interruption where speakers interrupt each other (Li, 2001).

Recognizing an occurrence of two overlaps in line 94 to 97, it is actually a procedural meta-comment, as the exchange between AMP1 and AMP2 do not interrupt AMP2 from his completion right. It is noticed that the interrupter AMP1 perceives that AMP2 might need help so he provides the current speaker, AMP2, with a phrase (line 96). So at turn 17, AMP2 appears to feel interrupted, when there is an overlap (an aside from AMP1), but later he soon realizes that AMP1's interruption is not necessarily an attempt to interfere. However, AMP2 seems to be a quick-tempered person as he then successfully interrupts AMP1 before he completes his utterance. Yet there is no evidence of discomfort among the speakers as they express agreement on each other's turns (see lines 81, 82, 88 & 92).

Men use less mitigation than women, so they produce direct interruptions. Based on a study on college man and women by Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin (1999), an assumed reason is because women are more supportive than men, especially in female-to-female conversation. However, men interrupt others more than the women do only when they are in the same-gender group talk. The findings of this study however show that more interruptions are carried out by female participants in the mixed-group, which contradicts Carli's (1989) view that men interrupt women in mixed-sex discussions as men in groups have a higher status than women and it would be even larger in a mixed-gender group. The following extract provides an example.

### Extract 23 MGD\_03

Turn	Message	Line
026 MFP5:	[so:: ](0.5) you are actually, not against the idea of the English is important, English is st[rong ]	53 54
027 MMP5:	[in China] really I don't [think it's such important]	55 56
028 MFP6:	[yeah (1.0) ] I::I: [I think ]	57 58
029 MFP5:	[you are] saying they slowly pick up English [study so why don't]they just study [(0.3) already or they fluent]	59 60
030 MMP5:	[yeah I mean they ] (0.3) [yeah(0.2) unless unless you] are English major students, maybe that's ahh:: that's necessary for you to be profession in [English ]	61 62 63
031 MFP6:	[I:: I TH]INK_I don't agree with [you I::] I understand you use the situation of Malaysia and the [China] as different for our kind of situation that in China is not necessary for every-	64 65 66 67
032 MMP5:	[ 'yeah '] [ye::s ]	68 69
033 MFP6:	-citizen to master English, but I think, I still think it is better to, for personal er: for individual to, ah:: to h[ave [English] ]	70 71
034 MFP5:	[must be::: ]	72
035 MMP5:	[why English]	73
036 MFP6:	because before we study En[glish] we need to learn it's w[ord] we need to know the [kno]wledge about word	74 75
037 MMP5:	[yes ] [yes] [yes]	76 77

From Extract 23 above, the first interruption is carried out by MP5 as he does not wait until FP5 finishes her sentence (lines 54-55). But when FP6 is about to expresses her opinion, FP5 interrupts her and conveys her question on MP5's words in a direct way ('*you are saying.....*' in line 59). It is possible to view FP5's interruption in turn 29 as inevitable because she is doing a repair on MP5's point, as seen in turn 27. Later a second interruption occurs in turn 30. Here, MP5 overlaps FP5 with a confirmation answer, which he then continues in the same turn and interrupts FP5's comment with another overlap (line 61). Following that is another direct interruption by FP6 at turn 31 ('*I THINK I don't agree with you*' - line 64). In addition, it is found that overlaps in this extract (turns 30, 32, 37) are uttered in support rather than to obstruct.



The findings here point to two issues: first, it is that in both same-gender and mixed-gender groups, it appears that the women give the impression that they tend to build on one another's talk, signifying cooperation and solidarity. Women tend to interrupt to support, agree and complete one another's point in most cases while men interrupt with challenge utterances. Secondly, interruptions are initiated more by men in same-gender group compared with that of women. However, women interrupt others almost double to that of the male speakers in the mixed-group discussion (see Table 4.9). So from the analysis, it may be concluded that although female participants initiate less interruptions than the male participants, they not only can hold their own arguments with male participants, but are also cooperative and competitive as well during the discussion (see full transcription in Appendix V,VI,VII for details).

#### **4.8.3 Summary of Gender Difference and Similarities in Interactional behaviour**

Based on the performance of the participants in the whole group oral interactions, they show some differences in their interactional pattern. However, both male and female participants tend to display less stereotypical behaviour, especially when they interacting with those of the opposite gender. Male participants do not appear to occupy higher status position in this group. The person who exhibits a high amount of task behaviour is assumed to be the chair (Carli, 1989), but due to some participants who are highly engaged in the discussions, the assumed chair does not make an impact in his/her role in the group. Table 4.10 shows the features displayed by all the participants when they carry out group discussion.

Table 4.10 Interactional Behaviours of the Participants in Group Discussion

	Single-gender group								Mixed-group			
	All-Male				All-Female				Male		Female	
Participant	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4	FP1	FP2	FP3	FP4	MP5	MP6	FP5	FP6
<b>Assumed chairperson</b>	√						√		√		√	
<b>Talkative</b>	√	√	√		√		√		√	√	√	
<b>Interruption</b>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√		√	√
<b>Overlap</b>	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√
<b>mitigated</b>				√	√	√	√	√		√	√	
<b>Ingratiated</b>								√	√			√
<b>Express approbation</b>	√						√		√			√
<b>Highly engage</b>	√	√	√	√	√		√		√		√	√
<b>Aggressive response</b>	√		√		√	√	√	√	√		√	√
<b>Direct</b>	√	√	√	√			√		√		√	√
<b>Implicit</b>					√			√			√	
<b>Use question when disagree</b>	√	√		√	√		√		√			

Next in the table below (Table 4.11) is a summary of the politeness strategies employed by each participant during the opening and closing sequences in the group discussion. On the whole, based on the politeness strategy used by the participants, both male and female speakers tend to speak politely in the discussion. They appear to make use of positive politeness strategy and bald-on record politeness. It is noted that FP5 in the mixed-group discussion uses the most politeness strategy than all the other participants in the opening and closing sequences.

Table 4.11 Politeness Strategies Applied by the Participants

Politeness strategy	Single-gender group								Mixed-group			
	All-Male				All-Female				Male		Female	
	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4	FP1	FP2	FP3	FP4	MP5	MP6	FP5	FP6
Positive politeness	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√
Negative politeness												
Bald on record	√	√				√	√		√		√	
Off-record	√										√	√

#### 4.9 Conclusion

This chapter presents the results of the analysis and then discusses the findings in the light of the research questions posed in chapter One. The findings have provided an insight of interactional patterns by Chinese speakers of English in group interactions. It is shown that certain identified features (e.g. interruption, discourse features of opening and closing sequences and application of politeness strategies) have been observed to differ with each group. Some other features (e.g. the Asian core cultural values reflected in the interactions) have been also noted in the findings. It shows that such analysis of discourse features in group interactions reflects the characteristics of the interaction patterns in this context. In the next chapter, a summary of the findings will be provided and some implications of the study will also be discussed.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This study embarks on an investigation of how the Chinese speakers of English open and close the interaction when they are asked to discuss the topics related to current issues of China. In Chapter four, the opening and closing sequences in the three group discussions were described. In this Chapter, the outstanding features of these sequences will be summarized in related to their sequential structures and components so as to examine how the group discussions are done by the three groups of Chinese English speakers (i.e. the first research question).

This Chapter also explains reflection of the Chinese core cultural values in the participants' behaviour to open and close the interactions (i.e. the second research question). In addition, the observed features of gender differences and similarities in group interaction will be discussed in this chapter as well (i.e. the third research question).

#### **5.2 Summary of Features of the Opening and Closing Sequences**

The analysis of the data focuses on the patterns of the interaction in relation to the opening and closing sequences, and compares these two in the discussion. The findings demonstrate that these sequences are structured in distinct ways in the three different groups and how politeness strategies are used by the participants to open and close the discussions.

### 5.2.1 Sequential Structures of Opening Sequences

On the basis of the differences in the ways of opening and closing, it was suggested that like the American speakers (Watanabe, 1993), Chinese speakers of English perceived the speech event of group discussion as an activity that a few individuals are equally bound together only for this purpose. There is no determining hierarchy to any member of a group and hence no hierarchical order governs its members. This is probably the reason why the discussions are conducted in an unplanned and unorganized way. The findings show that although there was no designated chairperson, one of the group members automatically took on the role voluntarily. Two individuals in each same-gender group took responsibility of the opening sequences. In the mixed-group, a male (MP5) and a female (FP5) participant cooperatively initiated the opening sequences. The three sequential structures of discussion openings are reproduced in Table 5.1 below for comparison purposes.

Table 5.1 Patterns of Group Discussion Openings

Sequential structure of All-Female Group Opening	Sequential structure of All-Male Group Opening	Sequential structure of Mixed-Group Opening
(Small Talk) ↓ Indication of opening or new topic initiation ↓ Introduction to the discussion topic ↓ Noticeable Pause or Laughter ↓ (Supplementary on the topic)	Framing 'ok' for listens' attention ↓ Indication of disucssion/topic initiation ↓ (Agreement from the group) ↓ Introduction to the topic	(Noticeable pause or framing markers 'ok') ↓ Indication of discussion /new topic initiation ↓ Framing markers 'ok'/ 'all right' ↓ Introduction to the topic

The above table shows that the only similarity among the three groups is there was an indication of discussion or topic initiation. The all-female group preferred an explicit way of indicating the opening or topic transition, e.g. *'first one'*; *'let's discuss the second topic'*;

*'next one'*. The mixed-group and the all-male group diverted all the attention of the group back to the discussion by uttering "*OK*". Both of the two same-gendered groups signalled the topic initiation and then went straight to the introduction of the topic. Mixed-group preferred getting confirmation of topic initiation from group members. Overall, the sequential structure of the opening sequences in the three group discussions was relatively straightforward. Although there were differences, they did share common features such as "noticeable pause" when participants were brainstorming or while they were waiting for an initiation from the others; and the framing marker "ok" and hesitation filler "er" were applied to fill the gaps.

Discussion openings in all three groups involved politeness strategies, mostly positive politeness strategy. It is interesting to find that participants in the all-female group opened their discussion in a straightforward manner. They applied bald on-record strategy (e.g. *'first one'*; *'the first topic'*; *'next one'*), then directly moved on to introduce the topic. But this did not create a face threat to the other group members. In contrast, indication of topic initiation in AMGD openings was not as explicit as that of the AFGD. The assumed chairpersons (AFP3 & AMP1) of the two homogeneous groups initiated the discussion by applying positive politeness strategy (e.g. *'hello guys I think today we have talk about some important issues...'*) so that "we" consciousness invoked the members to have a sense of belonging to the group. The politeness strategies employed in the opening sequences satisfied the group members' positive face.

### **5.2.2 Sequential Structure of Closing Sequences**

Like the opening structures, the three closing sequences appeared to be remarkably different. The sequential structures of the discussion closings among the three groups are shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Patterns of Group Discussion Closings

Sequential Structure of All-Female Group Closing	Sequential Structure of All-Male Group Closing	Sequential Structure of Mixed-Group Closing
<pre> (pre-closing signal 'so' or Laughter)   ↓ Evaluation   ↓ (Noticeable pause)   ↓ Terminal marker 'ok'           </pre>	<pre> Indication of topic closing   ↓ (Confirmation of topic/discussion closing)   ↓ Declaration of topic/ discussion closing with terminal marker 'ok'   ↓ (Expressing of appreciation)           </pre>	<pre> (Noticeable pause or transitional maker 'alright, ok'   ↓ Indication of topic or discussion close   ↓ Confirm the group intention   ↓ (Approval from the group)   ↓ Declaration of topic or discussion closure   ↓ Confirmation of closure   ↓ (Expression of appreciation)   ↓ (Terminal exchanges 'bye')           </pre>

The first marker, a pre-closing signal “*so*”, noticeable pause or transitional maker “*ok*” were employed to close the topic. In AFGD, an evaluation ‘*that’s good*’ from the assumed chair (AFP3) seemed to predominate in all the closing sequences. In other two groups, pre-closing signal was then followed by an indication of topic close. This term can be illustrated as a question that the answer is required from the other participants. The participants were allowed to continue or in this context, response to the request could be either positive in the form of agreement, or negative in the form of silence. This shows that participants in the AMGD responses in the form of silence were in contrast to the participants in the MGD response. At the point when there were no more ideas raised, the term “*ok*” as a terminal marker was used, and it repeatedly occurred for all the three groups to declare the closing of a topic or the whole discussion. The discussion was closed by the assumed chair with an explicit declaration and an expression of appreciation in the AMGD and the MGD.

In general, an ending of a communication between the Chinese would involve a positive comment, such as an expression of thanks, and evaluation (e.g. *'very nice to have you here'*). Before these comments occur, the process would see the use of some politeness strategies. The strategies that tend to occur before the positive comment were mostly positive politeness strategies (e.g. *"let's move on to the second topic"*), and bald on-record strategies (e.g. *'can we stop here'*; *'finish'*). The employment of such politeness strategies was mostly observed in the closing sequences of the MGD and the AMGD.

To sum up, the answer for the first research question: the participants did not plan the procedural matters before they actually discussed the topic, so it appeared that there was no identical pattern in the opening and closing sequences. Among the three groups, positive politeness strategy and bald on-record strategy were applied especially in the mixed-group and the all-male group, whereas in the all-female group this appeared to be rather straightforward. They were similar in terms of having some shared common features in the opening and closing sequences. However, the differences were openings and closings in the mixed-group discussion seemed to be relatively longer and more organized than in the other two groups.

### **5.3 The Chinese Cultural Values Reflected in the Group Discussion**

There are many factors such as cultural values, level of formality and the types of relationships between the participants which influence the forms of discussion openings and closings (Boden, 1994). The varied formality in the group discussion can be interpreted as a reflection of the impact from cultural values. These three group discussions were supposed to be task-oriented while it was often suggested that the Chinese people tend to consider relationships over tasks (Hofstede, 2011). Thus, the participants appeared to adopt an



informal approach to the group discussion. Moreover, within all the groups, 'I' consciousness throughout the whole content sequences, and the collectivism feature 'we' appeared to be used in the opening and closing sequences. For understanding the impact of Chinese cultural values on the participants' behaviour in opening and closing sequences, Gao's (1998) framework provides the guideline of the Chinese way of communication.

Firstly, the discussions were perceived as polite communication although the participants did not adopt a relationship-oriented manner in their discussions. The phrase used in the openings and closings such as '*hello guys*' and '*thank you*' were a form of respectful behaviour, and showing appreciation. This phenomenon occurred in the all-male group and mixed-group discussions. Besides, the participants appeared to indicate implicitly when the discussion was about to end. The utterances such as '*so are we get a:*', and '*time is too long*' indicated that they did not want to directly express that they feel exhausted in the discussion and would like to close. But implicit speech did not always occur in these group discussions. Thirdly, listening-centred communication was an outstanding feature at the beginning of the discussion. As mentioned before, that there was no assigned chair, the listening-centered feature occurred in the all-male group and the mixed-group before the initiation of the first topic. But most of the participants became highly engaged in the group discussion once the silence was broken. The reason could be because the group members were insiders and so they were not strictly restricted by this 'face' maintenance norm in the discussion. For example, the phrase '*finish?*' in Chinese is usually perceived as a question which could mean whether one has spoken sufficiently, but it may also be interpreted that it is a threat to the hearer's positive face in this occasion.

On the whole, the cultural values such as politeness and listening-centered communication were found to make an impact on how the participants open and close the discussion. However, these norms did not explicitly govern the Chinese speakers of English as they

behaved like members of both the collectivism culture and individualism culture. Furthermore, face threatening acts occurred in the opening and closings sequences and yet group harmony was maintained throughout the discussion.

## **5.4 Gender Similarities and Differences in Interactional Behaviour**

Since young men and women interact frequently at their tertiary level studies, it is under these conditions that both males and females are usually of equal status, and the study on interactional patterns has revealed some interesting findings. In the single-gender groups, the discussion was opened and closed by the assumed chair, yet in the mixed-group, the openings and closings were collaboratively produced by a male participant and a female participant. Moreover, in the mixed-group, it was actually the female participant (FP5) who took the responsibility of discussion initiation and closing declaration. The gender differences and similarities in interactional strategy used are highlighted in the following section.

### **5.4.1 Turn-taking and Turn Length**

In the turn-taking system, it was found there is an unannounced consensus between the Chinese speakers of English: stance taking or arguing after each group member have presented their own opinion. The findings displayed a distinct turn-taking organisation in the oral interaction. As reviewed, a coordinated turn-allocation seemed to be the most distinct feature of MGD and AMGD. Turn-allocation in AMGD provided a chance to those who indicated an intention to speak in the group, and encouraged the members to convey their message effectively. In the AFGD, turn-taking was smooth on the whole, as they appeared to be mitigated and passive to the other's speech. The turn-management action was normally performed by MP1 and FP5. Each group discussion consisted of almost 200 turns but there was a wide range of turn-length. There were many long turns taken by the members of the

AMGD. The turn-length of MGD is 2-3 lines on average and was slightly shorter than that of the all-female groups.

#### **5.4.2 Overlapping and Interruption**

Based on the calculation, the occurrence of overlaps was particularly high in the mixed-group while the frequency of overlaps in the same-gender group was similar. The overlapping in mixed-group discussion was mainly contributed by MP5 when he reinforced the other's speech with 'yeah' and 'yes' during the discussion. But the overlapping in the same-gender groups, more often, were two interlocutors speaking simultaneously. So the gender difference in group interaction behaviour was not particularly distinct.

However, the interruptions in group discussions provided distinct features of gender difference in group interaction behaviour. The occurrence of interruptions in the AMG D was significantly more than the other two groups. However, men interrupted more than women did only when they were in the homogenous group discussion. The interruptions raised by female participants in the mixed-group were more than the ones raised by the male participants, which goes against Carli's (1989) finding. She observed that men interrupted women in mixed-gender interaction as men in groups have a higher status than women, and it would be larger in mixed-gender group. These findings also suggest that the female participants in mixed-group interrupted others directly to repair the other's speech or when there was a disagreement. Interruption in the all-female group occurred as well, but they interrupted to support, agree and complete one another's point in most cases.

In addition, as for politeness strategies, none of the participants applied negative politeness strategies. Positive politeness was commonly applied in all groups. It is also interesting to find that the participants in the mixed-group applied both bald on-record and off-record politeness strategies in the discussion; AMP1 applied bald on-record politeness strategy to

close the topic when off-record politeness strategy did not work for him. The interactional features such as ingratiation and expression of approbation, which were expected to be observed by female participants, were not presented. But implicit talk was employed by some of the female participants. So both male and female participants apply politeness strategies in their discussion.

Hence, to answer the third research question, both male and female participants would self-select to present their opinion during the discussion and they used positive politeness strategy. They overlapped in their talk to support others' intention or to coincidentally speak together as they seemed to show a communal orientation in the interaction. They provided aggressive responses to others but they interrupted others as well. These are some of the similarities. However, male and female participants behaved differently in some aspects. Firstly, male participants interrupted others more than women, particularly with intrusive interruptions directed at gaining the floor in conversations in the same-gender group. Female participants interrupted others for support, and agreement. The female participants operated in the absence of some constraints by interacting in the all-female groups. This practical study of interaction among equal-status participants indicates that there are relatively few gender differences in behaviour. Gender difference is larger in single-gender group than in mixed-group interactions. Overall, there is less-stereotype in gender difference of language use and interactional behaviour.

### **5.5 Limitation of the Study**

This study is based on a small group of participants who are currently pursuing their postgraduate studies in universities within Malaysia. Thus, the findings are obtained after an analysis of the data obtained taken from only a small number of Chinese students in Malaysia.

Therefore, the findings cannot be used to make any conclusive claims on the interactional patterns of the entire Chinese male and female speakers of English population.

Furthermore, this is a small scale research and is exploratory in nature, thus it does not attempt to evaluate the extent of the discourse features which are influenced by Chinese culture. Instead, it focuses on the most outstanding discourse features which have emerged as the Chinese speakers of English interact with one another in this context. Besides, this research does not make comparison with group interactions done by other native or non-native English speakers. It is not possible to cover all the analytical aspects in one study that could have made the study more extensive.

## **5.6 Contributions of This Study**

This research examined group discussions conducted by Chinese speakers of English in Malaysia, with particular focus on the opening and closing sequences. There are not many studies done in this area and more could be explored and on a larger scale. However, a small research contribution may be considered and is organized in the following two subsections.

### **5.6.1 Contribution to Research on Group Interaction**

The findings of this study have highlighted the interaction patterns in single-gender and mixed-gender interactions among Chinese speakers of English, in discussions on non-sensitive topics. Judgments of how Chinese speakers of English behave in group interaction, which are based on assumptions that Chinese cultural values, would be improper in the light of these findings.

Educators agree that using group discussions in language learning contexts are beneficial and it has also been proven that group work promotes collaboration among English learners (Khan, 2009). This inevitably helps develop the learner's English communicative skill (Chen & Hird, 2006). Group activity is an appropriate tool for Chinese EFL learners, but how

group work operates and what they actually do in groups still need to be explored (Chen & Hird, 2006). Although the data is not collected at a language learning setting, this study described several aspects of how Chinese speakers of English express their ideas in oral group interaction.

On the other hand, the findings of this study show that the openings and closings of mixed-group discussion were presented in a fairly-organized structure, in contrast with those of homogeneous groups is noteworthy. Taking the discussion patterns of the opening sequences as an example, the homogeneous group interaction was initiated and directed by an assumed chair person, so the process of the interaction appeared simple and unplanned. As for the mixed-group, there was no chairperson but they cooperated among themselves and accomplished the openings successfully. Therefore, it was observed that gender variables in groups may also have affected discussion patterns of the mixed-gender group interaction. This implies that in language learning contexts, the choice of members within a group discussion does matter.

### **5.6.2 Contribution to Research on Culture issues**

The findings of this study provide insights into the reflection on the impact of culture on the behaviour of the Chinese speakers of English. The current study demonstrates that the data can make a valuable contribution in the field of cross-cultural research with the description of the Chinese's interactional patterns.

### **5.7 Implications**

From the findings of this study, the linguistic implications can be derived from the analysis of the discourse features of the group interactions. In the Malaysian context, the Chinese postgraduate students use English to convey information. The occurrence of their speech exhibited the way they get the message across in the group interaction.

By conducting an in-depth analysis of the opening and closing sequences of three group discussions, this study demonstrated that group discussions conducted by Chinese speakers of English are distinct in patterns. The participants' behaviours in the discussion are not exactly restricted by their national cultural values. However, for the data collected from the 3 groups, the empirical results can be used as a starting point for similar further studies in the future. Also, future studies using a larger number of participants could be useful in order to confirm or refute the findings of this study.

However, the current research was restricted in size. Although the complete piece of refined transcription (see Appendices V, VI, VII) was presented, this study is limited in its focus as it only examined the opening and closing sequences. However, the main discussion section is also a rich source of data. For example, the findings from this research suggest that politeness strategies are applied in the opening and closing sequences differently during the discussion among the three groups. It was found that interruptions raised by female participants were more than those raised by the male participants in the mixed-group; both male and female participants applied bald on-record politeness strategies during the discussion process but when in the mixed-group, they became indirect especially when they asked for others' intention. Hence, for future research, it would also be interesting to examine the discourse features in the whole discussion so that a better picture of group interaction pattern could be provided.

Another area of research that is worth investigating may be to compare the interactional pattern of the English speakers from different cultures. The findings from other researchers such as Watanabe (1993), Ongwatana & Chordia (2008) and Li & Nesi (2004) are related to group interaction and have indicated that the behaviour of participants is consistent with the national culture they belong to. The participants are influenced by their own culture and have

developed a set of behaviour patterns. If this is the case, it would thus be interesting to undertake comparison of group discussions done by English speakers of other cultural groups.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

This study has presented a concise overview of group discussion in a tertiary environment by Chinese speakers of English. It illustrates that although group discussion is conducted among the Chinese, they differ in the interactional behaviour. Gender differences and Chinese cultural values might be some of the factors that govern their interactional behaviour. However, Chinese speakers of English do not completely follow the expected communication norms when they use English in the discussions. There is great potential for further research to in-depth studies the Chinese speakers of English.



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## APPENDIX I

### Background Information Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Gender:            ☐ Male    ☐ Female
2. Please tick your age group:   ☐ 21-25            ☐ 26-30
3. Have you been brought up in urban area?   ☐ Yes    ☐ No  
If no, where have you been brought up? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which language/Chinese dialect do you speak in your hometown? (You may tick more than one.)  
  
☐ Cantonese   ☐ Mandarin   ☐ English   ☐ Others \_\_\_\_\_
5. The above language(s)/dialect(s), please indicate fluency.  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_   ☐ Very fluent   ☐ Fair   ☐ Minimal fluency  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_   ☐ Very fluent   ☐ Fair   ☐ Minimal fluency  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_   ☐ Very fluent   ☐ Fair   ☐ Minimal fluency
6. What is your highest educational qualification? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many years have you been learning English? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How long have you been studying in Malaysia? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many participants do you know in this group discussion? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How often do you see the other participants in your group discussion?  
  
☐ Daily    ☐ Weekly    ☐ Less than weekly



## APPENDIX II

### Jefferson's (2004) Transcription System

[ ]	Square brackets mark the start and end of overlapping speech. They are aligned to mark the precise position of overlap.
↓	Vertical arrows precede marked pitch movement, over and above normal rhythms of speech. They are used for notable changes in pitch beyond those represented by stops, commas and question marks.
→	Side arrows are used to draw attention to features of talk that are relevant to the current analysis.
Underlining	Indicates emphasis; the extent of underlining within individual words locates emphasis and also indicates how heavy it is.
CAPITALS	Marks speech that is hearably louder than surrounding speech. This is beyond the increase in volume that comes as product of emphasis.
°I know it, °	'degree' signs mark speech that is relatively softer than the surrounding talk.
...(0.4)	A numeral placed within parentheses following three dots marks a pause of 0.4 seconds and above.
(.)	A micropause, hearable but too short to measure.
(h)	When a bracketed 'h' appears it means that there was laughter within the talk
((staccato))	Additional comments from the transcriber, e.g. about features of context or delivery.
she wa::nted	Colons show degrees of elongation of the prior sound; the more colons, the more elongation.
hhh	Without a dot preceded marks audible inhalation
.hhh	With a dot preceded marks audible exhalation.
Yeh,	'Continuation' marker, marks continuing intonation.
y'know?	Question marks signal stronger, 'questioning' intonation.
Yeh.	Full stops mark falling, stopping intonation ('final contour').
>he said<	'greater than' and 'lesser than' signs enclose speeded-up talk. Occasionally they are used the other way round for slower talk.
( )	Words within parentheses mark the transcriber's uncertainty of the actual words produced.
( )	Empty parentheses represent segments of talk that could not be transcribed.

## APPENDIX III

### Consent Form

University of Malaya

**Research Title:** Interactional Patterns of Chinese Speakers of English in Group Interaction

**Researcher:** Li Li

Purpose of Research:

This study is to identify, analyse and describe the linguistic features in group interactions among Chinese speakers of English in a tertiary environment. You are being asked to participate because you are undergoing your postgraduate study in University of Malaya, age range: 22-30.

Procedures:

You will be instructed to discuss the given topics in English. There is no time limit to the discussion. The discussions will be video and audio recorded by the researcher.

Confidentiality:

Your answers will be confidential. The records collected during this study will be kept private. I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file and only the researchers will have access to your records.

**I understand that:**

- A. My participation is voluntary, and I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project at any time. My refusal to participate will not result in any penalty.
- B. By signing this agreement, I do not waive any legal rights or release University of Malaya, its agents, or you from liability for negligence.

I hereby give my consent to be the subject of your research and to be audio/video recording:

---

Name

---

Signature

---

Date

## APPENDIX IV

### Consent Form

National University of Malaysia

**Research Title:** Interactional Patterns of Chinese Speakers of English in Group Interaction

**Researcher:** Li Li

Purpose of Research:

This study is to identify, analyse and describe the linguistic features in group interactions among Chinese speakers of English in a tertiary environment. You are being asked to participate because you are undergoing your postgraduate study in National University of Malaysia, age range: 22-30.

Procedures:

You will be instructed to discuss the given topics in English. There is no time limit to the discussion. The discussions will be video and audio recorded by the researcher.

Confidentiality:

Your answers will be confidential. The records collected during this study will be kept private. I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file and only the researchers will have access to your records.

**I understand that:**

- A. My participation is voluntary, and I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project at any time. My refusal to participate will not result in any penalty.
- B. By signing this agreement, I do not waive any legal rights or release National University of Malaysia, its agents, or you from liability for negligence.

I hereby give my consent to be the subject of your research and to be audio/video recording:

---

Name

---

Signature

---

Date

## APPENDIX V

### All-female Group Discussion (AFGD)

Turns	Message	Line
001 AFP2:	<i>zan kai shi ba</i> let's begin	1
002 Researcher:	<i>sheng yin shao wei da yi dian OK</i> please speak a little bit louder OK	2
003 AFP2:	<i>na ni de recorder zai naer ne</i> so where is your recorder	3
004 AFP3:	here, hahaha...((point to the recorder))	4
005 AFP2:	ah....	5
006 AFP1:	<i>ni dui zhe recorder shuo le ban tian le</i> you have been talking to the recorder all along	6
	((all laugh 2.0))	7
007 AFP3:	I will help you	8
	(pause 2.0)	9
008 AFP3:	first one do you that we should emphasis English in the Chinese educational system	10 11
	((All laugh 3.0))	12
009 AFP2:	give your reasons	13
010 AFP1:	wow I think we need to emphasis this situation in China now that we may have reform about English courses in the Chinese educational system er:: We all heard from the others or news that the Chinese, for the Chinese students the English may not be so important in the education so er:: em(.) today we discussing is English important or not for my opinion I think I don't agree with this reform because I still think that the English is very important. Because now is a globalization world so it's much better for us to master second language rather than always say Chinese so ....	14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22
011 AFP2:	good idea	23
	((All laugh 3.0))	24
012 AFP1:	so you are agree?	25
013 AFP2:	I think I agree with you to some degree because we know that in China now even in our basic language or our native language is Chinese but we know that English is very important now it's become an international language So no matter what we are doing no matter in the future what we will ...(0.4) er.hhh how to say that what kind of job we will do in the future English is also like a tool to communicate with outsi[de ] like to go worldwide it become very important even if now in our government they mention that for English in the senior school students and the scores will be change maybe from 150 reduce into 100 right?	26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35
014 AFP1:	[Yes]	36
015 AFP3:	righ[t yes ]	37
016 AFP1:	[Yeah]Something like that	38
017 AFP2:	but they said that even if is demand like this but the students in their point of view English is just like before it didn't change because	39 40

	some of my friend they mention that she teaches in a:: a tuition school	41 42
018 AFP3:	OK	43
019 AFP2:	and then she said that the students in her students they said that they didn't think anything different although the government mentions that, they still think the English is difficult(.) they need to learn much better than before(.) Hehe.hhh	44 45 46 47
020 AFP3:	what do you think?(( to AFGP4))	48
021 AFP4:	er:: I think English is very important because [err:: for ]	49
022 AFP1:	[because ] of you learn English?	50 51
	((all laugh 3.0))	52
023 AFP4:	kind of a reason because we are English learners and I want to be English teacher so I want the government to emphasis the English(.) [er:: ]	53 54 55
024 AFP1:	[why](.) why do you think English is very important	56
025 AFP4:	ah:: because English is global language and it's used in many countries especially the most developed countries(.) so if you want to go abroad and see the world and you have to learn English(.) besides the academic journals and book are all written in English So if you want to have some knowledge general idea of your major of your (1.0) so you have to you have to °learn English °	57 58 59 60 61 62
026 AFP2:	yes	63
027 AFP1:	actually I am thinking why these kinds of thing happen we all know English is important but why the Chinese government still want to reduce the [importance of English ]	64 65 66
028 AFP3:	[English is for commun]ication(.) it's a tool for [communication(.) since] nowadays there are many people who are speak English who are learning Eng[lish]	67 68 69
029 AFP1:	[yes (.)but I know why is] [yes]	70 71
030 AFP3:	and then (you) ask before that people emphasis a lot on English it was because it's important(.) and American as the(.) a country who speaks English as their mother tongue was quite powerful before so people wanted to learn English(.) but nowadays(.) firstly(.) since so many people know English(.) so people should learn other things rather than just focus on English it's just a tool you can't learn English(.) but it doesn't mean that you go with that purpose(.) as a final purpose(.) so you just learn English(.) learn other things through English(.) so I don't think that we should emphasis a lot since you can communicate in English or in other language	72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81
031 AFP1:	you don't think we need to emphasis English?	82
032 AFP3:	no I do[n't think so ]	83
033 AFP1:	[if you don't ] emphasis, how can you use English as a tool to communicate or to read the material [or learn other knowledge?]	84 85
034 AFP3:	[see that, do you emphasis ] English in your daily life now? do you still learn English a lot?	86 87
	(pause 2.0)	88
035 AFP1:	yes I [do. (h)(1.0) ]	89

036 AFP3:	[may(.) yes you do] but that's naturally(.) but not just in the education in the class(.) and then you say that I need to learn English I read this article because I want to learn English(.) but actually it's for your major thing it's not just for English(.) when [you learn about ]your major through English yes it's not just about emphasis the language a lot(.) it's emphasis the knowledge(.) not only just the English but other languages	90 91 92 93 94 95 96
037 AFP1:	[it's for the course]	97
038 AFP3:	so I don't think that it should be emphasis too much on the language since you can <u>learn</u> knowledge	98 99
039 AFP1:	that's good points(.) actually I am thinking er:: maybe the other situation is the Chinese in the world is so: a very large number(.) it's a ve[ry large.hhh]	100 101 102
040 AFP3:	[ah:: It's ] population.	103
041 AFP1:	yes(.)so I think maybe the Chinese language will play a more: er::	104
042 AFP3:	important role [((hehe))] oh that's good	105
043 AFP1:	[yes ]	106
044 AFP1:	so emphasis the Chinese. So as the Chinese if we learn English so much we will forget how to speak Chinese very well.	107 108
045 AFP3:	yes(.) [sometimes]	109
046 AFP1:	[so .hhh ] I don't know ((hehe:))	110
047 AFP3:	that's good(.) ok let's move to the second one(.) whether it is better for Chinese students to pursue postgraduate studies overseas	111 112
	(pause 3.0)	113
048 AFP1:	you see might ask ourselves	114
	((all laugh 2.0))	115
049 AFP1:	it's good to come to Malaysia?	116
050 AFP3:	yeah(.) but I think it depends(.) first depends on the students' financial how to say ((to AFGP2)) Financial support? if the families can support the stu: support the kid or kids to go abroad(.) and then the kid or the student can get used to the way of ah (1.0) oversea studies(.) I mean get used to the way that the knowledge is taught in different cultures (.) maybe that's a good choice(.) if some students cannot learn well through different way like a different educational system (1.0) it may be better for them to stay in China since they can benefit more from the Chinese system °educational system °	117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125
051 AFP1:	you are the very good point(.) we all facing that when we come to Malaysia we feel that something you are quite unfamiliar with the culture Muslim or something we are	126 127 128
052 All:	em::	129
053 AFP3:	yeah	130
054 AFP1:	but for my opinion I feel it's very good for me	131
055 AFP3:	ah::hehe .hhh yeah	132
056 AFP1:	very good for me to experience totally different culture and for everything is(.) er: even though we are in the globalization but everything is different	133 134 135
057 AFP3:	em hem:	136
058 AFP1:	if you are very something is very strange(.) but you need to get used to it and you need to understand it why it happen in different way	137 138

059 AFP3:	yes I [understand ]	139
060 AFP1:	[so it's very] good for us to boarder our mind or something like this.	140
	(pause 2.5)	141
		142
061 AFP4:	and I think the experience is quite different from what we read from the books(.) and the books will not tell me for example tells me the Muslims use the hands [(h) use ]the hand to eat	143
		144
		145
062 AFP3:	[hand to eat ]	146
063 AFP1:	you also can use the hand to eat	147
064 AFP4:	hehe: I don't like .hhh ((shake head))	148
	((all laugh 2.0))	149
065 AFP4:	so it's very interesting we just can know these things from your own experience not just from books	150
		151
066 AFP1:	I think that's why we want to go outside	152
067 AFP4:	yes(.) to see more.	153
068 AFP2:	I think another thing is we know that now in China many students they are postgraduate. But within graduated, we cannot see any different, or we cannot see something very different from before.	154
		155
		156
069 AFP1:	yes	157
070 AFP3:	you mean the student ability or:::	158
071 AFP2:	their ability (1.0) er:: because when my friend or some of my friends even they have already graduated(.) but after that they said that 'I feel very::	159
		160
		161
072 AFP1:	boring or::	162
073 AFP2:	I feel very grateful and very [pity (.) I shouldn't] I shouldn't take the postgraduate study because I didn't learn anything (.) because they say that at begin maybe before they enter the postgraduate stage maybe they think it will be very good them and they can learn a lot but after that they realize that it's not really like what they thought	163
		164
		165
		166
		167
	[[ (all laugh 1.5)) ]	168
074 AFP3:	yes ((all knock heads))	169
075 AFP2:	so especially the knowledge they think just like the lecturers give them something and then they will do just like copy and paste thins kind of things	170
		171
		172
	((all laugh 1.5))	173
076 AFP2:	so nothing changes(.)so indeed especially the experience is very different(.) and until now I think it should be very good for us have the experience one side because we can learn a lot really a lot right? which is very different from the education system in China and also we can have a very wide knowledge about other countries how they lives and how they communicate how they say like that	174
		175
		176
		177
		178
		179
077 AFGP1:	and one big difference is when we are here, we should speak English, but if we were in China, there is [no need to sp: ]	180
		181
078 AFP2:	[yeah no need] to speak English(.) we already (in full) heihei .hh	182
		183
079 AFP3:	hehe h::	184
080 AFP1:	yes	185
081 AFP4:	and besides I want to say that postgraduate entre exam is very hard	186
	(all laugh 1.5)	187

082 AFP1:	in China [is very hard ]	188
083 AFP4:	[yes It's very] depress many Chinese students and it was very tough time during the exam(.) after [and After the exam] if they pass the exam they will feel relax and when they doing their postgraduate learning they just like 'it's OK it's OK fine I pass the exam [(1.0)] I will be safe yeah	189 190 191 192 193
084 AFP1:	[I think that is for:: ]	194
085 AFP3:	[safe.]	195
086 AFP1:	they get the key of the door.	196
	(all laugh 1.5)	197
087 AFP4:	yes(.) someone yes just like that	198
088 AFP1:	yeah right(.) but I think we talk about all these topics we are thinking about the Chinese education system the English and the postgraduate education(.) why they don't have the passion to be very good learner in the stage of the postgraduate(.) because the requirement and the I don't know(.) maybe is the requirements from the lecturers of the universities is not so challengeable or not so creative(.) so you no need to change too much	199 200 201 202 203 204 205
	((all laugh 1.0))	206
089 AFP1:	maybe we should ask more friends from China	207
090 AFP4:	yeah	208
091 AFP1:	who had finished their postgraduate from China?	209
	(pause 1.5)	210
092 AFP3:	but I think they didn't learn although they have many lectures.	211
093 AFP1:	I think it depe[nds ]	212
094 AFP3:	[they] follow the .hh	213
095 AFP1:	yes(.) some supervisors	214
096 AFP3:	I think they didn't learn much it depends on the person I move into that think about that individually (.) as people are wires from (pers[onally])	215 216 217
097 AFP1:	[yeah(.)] I think some person they learn a lot(.) but I have a friend also he is very smart and he was young in the middle school(.) and he is in that (mid) performance very good so he can get the entrance to postgraduate and PhD for free	218 219 220 221
098 AFP3:	wow::	222
099 AFP1:	He gets the ground but finally he decide to give up the PHD study because he will so tired everyday go to the lab until midnight. I feel, I don't know.	223 224 225
	((All laugh 2.0))	226
100 AFP1:	I am very surprise about this because he is a very smart student(.) and he seems like to have big dream about something but finally he become another person	227 228 229
101 AFP2:	hehe::	230
102 AFP1:	no:: there is no dream	231
	((All laugh 2.0))	232
103 AFP1:	he just wants to leave school and just want to left (1.0) so I don't know what is the problem	233 234
	(pause 1.0)	235
104 AFP3:	but if we image that you have been study abroad for several years	236



	staring from your primary school to your postgraduate study and then may you also want to find a job, just get escape [for a while]	237 238
105 AFP1:	[you mean ] you mean maybe we will be [same ] 'hehe °	239 240
106 AFP3:	[yeah ] will be similar(.) because here we also study when you experience different things but you also study in the library you read	241 242 243
107 AFP4:	em::	244
108 AFP3:	and in China although maybe like you said that the lectures are not that challenge and not that creative(.) but you still study it's more individual ones rather than asking others for help(.) and you stay in the (lift) and go back to your (doom) and then come back to the (lift)(.) and next day again so (3.0) [you will] find the interesting by ourselves	245 246 247 248 249 250
109 AFP1:	[actually:] you are right(.) actually I am thinking is actually a long standing question I am thinking about it	251 252 253
110 AFP3:	ah hem::	254
111 AFP1:	I am thinking no matter what kind of life you are living now it doesn't matter where you are who you will be meet or like we are here or we are in China, it doesn't matter (.) The problem is what kind of life you pursue (.) right?	255 256 257 258
112 AFP3:	you should have: .hh	259
113 AFP1:	We have some many excuse about we should be there not here or something like this(.) we should learn something else(.) but I think all these are the excuse, that you don't pursue your life (1.0) so so maybe I don't know(.) hehh::	260 261 262 263
	((all laugh1.5))	264
114 AFP3:	I think that's good points	265
115 AFP1:	thanks	266
116 AFP3:	should have our own dreams	267
117 AFP2:	motivation.	268
118 AFP1:	actually...	269
119 AFP3:	yeah motivations(.) that's good ]	270
120 AFP1:	[I don't] I don't want to pursue the postgraduate in China(.)but I am very sure that the Chinese education will be globalized by the world(.) maybe some stages for them the primary school and the middle school before the university because the university system we learn it from outside from western(.) how to educate your students from the postgraduate to em: from the undergraduate to the postgraduate(.) but Before these before the middle school we have our own education materials education system(.) something we learn from outside but during this stage I really think that the Chinese education is very good(.) we had learn so many things from school right?	271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281
	((AFGP2 laugh 1.0))	282
121 AFP3:	I also like that point	283
122 AFP1:	yes	284
123 AFP3:	it's quite from	285

124 AFP1:	yes(.) so I think maybe someday when we talk about the Chinese education system we should say that change some part we still need to keep something	286 287 288
125 AFP2:	yeah(.) of course	289
126 AFP3:	wah:: that's good(.)[next one]	290
127 AFP1:	[where ] where are we now	291
	((all laugh 1.5))	292
128 AFP3:	Is technology making people more alienated?	293
	(pause 5.0)	294
129 AFP3:	em::	295
	(pause 2.0)	296
130 AFP1:	we talk about the knowledge, the technology [in the daily life](.) I think we need to talk about the internet han[d phone]	297 298
131 AFP3:	[technology ] [phone y]eah	299 300
132 AFP4:	hehe .hhh Weibo	301
	((all laugh 1.0))	302
133 AFP1:	but everybody use these every day?	303
134 AFP4:	yes	304
135 AFP1:	yes [every day ] (h to AFGP4) wow	305
136 AFP4:	[every min ]ute	306
137 AFP1:	every minute?	307
	((all laugh 2.0))	308
138 AFP2:	If you don't have, you don't have it mean that you are out of the world. Like that.	309 310
	(pause 3.0)	311
139 AFP1:	I think it makes sense in some way but I am not totally agree with this(.) it make sense in some way is because of we have the high technology so we just stay in the room for the whole day you can make call or [check the Internet]	312 313 314 315
140 AFP2:	[search internet ] yes	316
141 AFP1:	but if you don't have this kind of technology you will go outside and the keep in touch with people in person(.) so I think that's a bit different(.) but beyond that I think the technology is good not so em::harmful to your relationship because anytime you want to call or you want to talk with somebody you can do it	317 318 319 320 321
142 AFP3 +AFP4:	emm::	322
143 AFP1:	so I think in this sense, it's more it's good for us to get close with people	323 324
144 AFP3:	yes close to people(.)that's good(.) yeah I agree it depends	325
145 AFP2:	Sometimes maybe, I think sometimes it depends on the person. If the person like to communicate, not matter she or he use the telephone or [communicate] with the people face to face. Maybe nothing, not very the difference will be are not very obvious	326 327 328 329
146 AFP3:	[or not(.) yeah]	330
147 AFP2:	but if the people is very sociable, so in every situation she can be(1.0)	331 332
148 AFP3:	very active	333

149 AFP2:	yeah ((hehe)) that's why:	334
150 AFP3:	yes that's good	335
151 AFP1:	but what kind of problem the technology creates for us?	335
	(pause 1.5)	337
152 AFP3:	ah:: image that::	338
153 AFP1:	need the trust?	339
154 AFP3:	sorry?	340
155 AFP1:	the trust when [you go] to internet(.) we need to think about if my information will be stole or heist	341 342
156 AFP3:	[trust ] oh	343
157 AFP2:	Em... Something dangerous.	344
	(pause 2.0)	345
158 AFP3:	I thought the I thought of the topic I think it's given in IELTS speaking part (.) It says that technology makes people far away from their parents it get further from their parents or their relatives and friends because when they sit at the same table with their parents(.) but they play their hand phone or play the games and they don't talk that much(.)that makes their relationship::	346 347 348 349 350 351
159 AFP2:	become far	352
160 AFP3:	yes	353
161 AFP1:	I think that's the impact on the Children and the parents(.) but not for [us we are] adults	354 355
162 AFP3:	[hehe:: ] but now we are going to have our babies it's very responsible	356 357
	((all laugh 2.0))	358
163 AFP3:	seriously [haha:: ] seriously because we need to educate those people that still important to communicate with the others	359 360
164 AFP1:	[yes yes]	361
165 AFP3:	even if you use your phone but not just games.	362
	(pause 2.0)	363
166 AFP1:	that's right(.) but I don't have children so I::can (image) it	364
167 AFP3:	haha..	365
	((all laugh 2.0))	366
168 AFP3:	yes:: done?	367
	(pause 5.0)	368
169 AFP3:	OK.	369
	(pause 3.0)	370
170 AFP1:	when we talk about these topic(.) and I have a great article from our scholar MoYan he's the Nobel not Nobel:	371 372
171 AFP3:	yes Nobel prize	373
172 AFP1:	yes Nobel Prize winner(.) and he maybe I can share later with your guys the article in the live speech in Japan(.) and he is talking about the human being's problem we are facing now especially connect with the technology	374 375 376 377
173 AFP3:	oh::	378
174 AFP1:	and the because of the technology and because of the human beings desire(.) so we need more, maybe money or materials or something(.) even technology we need more satisfy for ourselves so the life has changed so much(.) the basic need for us is the air,	379 380 381 382

	water, food, the very basic need for us	383
175 AFP3:	yes.	384
176 AFP1:	we can be very happy with that, but now we cannot, we cannot because our desire beyond these and it's very uncontrolled	385 386
177 AFP4:	yes	387
178 AFP1:	out of control(.) so we think about the technology we should more be conscious be careful about these impact that will leave for us	388 389
179 AFP4:	Yes. And I think the internet, internet bring too much to us. We are exposed to very large, very broad world. For example if you go TaoBao (hehhe).	390 391 392
180 AFP1:	buy everything	393
181 AFP4:	this is good and that is good(.) everything you want everyth[ing ]	394
182 AFP1:	[buy] everything	395 396
183 AFP4:	Ah. Yes, as quick as possible, everything. So you ah it's a waste of time, waste of money and no stop. And [actually ]	397 398
184 AFP1:	[and you] don't really need this one	399 400
185 AFP4:	yes no need it's like the rubbish, just rubbish when you get all the things	401 402
186 AFP2:	hehe::	403
187 AFP1:	I think we are the very important generation	404
188 AFP4:	yes	405
189 AFP1:	because our generation have very special [(1.5)] period that we go through the very big change	406 407
190 AFP4:	[yes ]	408
191 AFP1:	it creates the technology so it's very important for us to have the clear mind how to lead the future generation our children	409 410
	((all laugh 2.0))	411
192 AFP1:	yeah	412
193 AFP3:	that's good ok	413

## APPENDIX VI

### All-male Group Discussion (AMGD)

Turn	Message	Line
	(pause 5.5)	1
001 AMP1:	er:: ok hello, guys(.) I think today we have talk about some important issues related to English language proficiency(.) you know there is a question that try to ask us whether more emphasis should be given to the English language in our Chinese educational system(.) I think it's very important because you know Chinese the English language is very important for to us to communicate with each other especially in particularly when we go abroad we need to with more international people we need to use English language to solve some practical issues in the society (.)when we go shopping, we see some movies whenever we meet some friends we need to use English language as a tool to communicate with others(.)I think so I think it's very important also you know as a very comprehensive person in nowadays society we need to know more than one language we should not only know our mother tongue we should not we should also know another language. English language very important. This is my opinion . hehe . so how about others	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
	(pause 1.0)	18
002 AMP3:	but I don't totally agree with your opinions in my cases I think that it's not enough to just emphasis the English in the Chinese educational system because it's not the government ah it's not the government issue(.) it should be from the individual point of view(.) for example if you write an article a thesis in Chinese, your will be more freely and easy to write whatever you want rather than you use English if you use English to think about it what is the construction of word what is grammar it take long time for you to write it's more difficulty than you to write in your mother language(.)that's way I think you write something ah::you want to ah:write or publish a paper in English is not easy for you to express what you really want(.) but if you use your mother language like if you use Chinese then you will be much easy for you to express for you to express what is what is your want really is(.) so that's why I think, in my opinion we should stick of doing or emphasizing on our mother language rather than emphasis more on English	19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34
	(pause 1.5)	35
003 AMP1:	yes so other guys' opinion	36
	(pause 1.0)	37
004 AMP4:	Em::I think now English is important because in (1.0) like the how to say currency world it's er: (0.5) for China it's er::developing country it's not the developed country so we are in the class of developing and we need to borrow the technology and other knowledge from foreign country like America(.) and so we er need to use English as a tool of (1.0) it will help us to learn the knowledge and invest the knowledge from foreign countries(.) but I think in the future when China becomes stronger and the er: er:: become er: developed	38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45

	country I think we no need to know English any more, and the Chinese will be very popular(.) that's my opinion	46 47
005 AMP2:	so(1.0) ah: I think ah (1.0) firstly to know the public to the education(.) so: er:(1.0) I think er:. for the education system target is to want the students to learn more knowledge so (0.5) em: I don't think you read the books and other journals from the foreign countries your can learn more(.)because the maybe some knowledge already translate this books and journals into Chinese so you just read Chinese, that's enough (1.0)er: it means I don't agree with that the the all the students should spend too much time to learn the English because waste time, it's waste waste a lot of time(.) and also we know that the outcome from learning English is not so good as the other countries(.) so maybe we can focus on the mathematics, engineering, just like .hh so (4.0) I don't agree with that	48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59
006 AMP1:	you know regarding to the issue that AMGP3 has mention AMGP3 mention that you know the use of English language(.) if if we give more attention to the English language so the Chinese language will lose its position(.) but I don't think that is a problem I think you emphasis the English language proficiency that means you will lose the Chinese position because they are both important(.) in English language it also be helpful for everybody to learn even the Chinese language because languages are interconnecting with each other. They are also very important (.)you know in the 21 <sup>st</sup> you know most important thing for the teaching just like everybody to be very comprehensive person(.) it's important we know other language but we are not lose our identity of Chinese language so that's very important	60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72
007 AMP2:	but do you think if you are being maybe one four year ago maybe people in the other countries learn Chinese is not the situation likes we learn English(.) so maybe China is developing not for .hh	73 74 75
008 AMP1:	yes	76
009 AMP2:	not for the the best one of the countries in the [worl]d	77
010 AMP1:	[yes I]agree with 'you °	78
011 AMP2:	so(1.0) this [is this is not the] the the the things for the communication, th[is is the one maybe for the one if you .hh]	79 80
012 AMP1:	[yes, you know ] [Yes but you mention is for Asian [China] ] because right now is the 21 <sup>st</sup> century in China	81 82 83
013 AMP2:	[if you::] but if you look at the Japan and Korean you find (1.0) they are bad at [learning English]	84 85 86
014 AMP1:	[Yeah. They are ] poor at English proficiency ]	87
015 AMP2:	[but [they] are(1.0) yes ]	88
016 AMP3:	[their knowledge, an]d powerful countries, they are confident on their iss[ues still enjoy enough ]	89 90 91
017 AMP2:	[yes you know there is ] no relationship between the learning and the the the learning English and the for your [(2.0) ] [yes for the country] development.	92 93 94 95

018 AMP3:	[country development] [I don't think so]	96 97
019 AMP1:	Because in my opinion learning English can make you (broad of your wiser?) that is very important. Learning English cannot lose your identity. It's very important. But I don't think that [we are using .hh ]	98 99 100
020 AMP2:	[but do you think ] that it's wasting time	101 102
021 AMP1:	no I don't think it's wasting [ 'time ']	103
022 AMP3:	[if you] emphasis more in English then you will lose some time in like engineering mathematics physicals	104 105
023 AMP2:	yeah	106
024 AMP1:	yes(.) but I [think: ]	107
025 AMP3:	[your time is very limited:]em:::	108
026 AMP2:	[do you] [think if you, if you will ]working in China do you think you will use En[glish?]	109 110
027 AMP1:	[even ] even though for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century is talent even though you [are wor]king in China you also must master English language because this is the globe globalize everybody should know more than one lan[guage]	111 112 113 114
028 AMP2:	[yes yes] [every ]body should know not means everybody must know (1.5) you should do	115 116 117
029 AMP1:	yeah [yes you can ]	118
030 AMP2:	[you can cho]lose another way, just like Japan just like Korea	119
031 AMP4:	the differences is that Japan is a developed country and the we treat them we tre[at them]as er:::(1.0)as super power in China actually when you ah::when you see the index of economic we will take Japan as a independent power and (0.5) er: so we casting this advantage to do so(.) it is technology very advantages very advance so I think there is no need for them to learn English they(1.0) they have their own [(0.5) power]	120 121 122 123 124 125 126
032 AMP2:	[but we]	127
033 AMP2:	[what what ] is your purpose of learning English?	128
034 AMP1:	purpose	129
035 AMP4:	purpose of .hhh	130
036 AMP2:	learning English	131
037 AMP4:	er:: because you know like like I said like currency US dollar is very popular as a main exchange currency in this world but Chinese we has the potential to be the main currency but now in this pose this stage(.) we still need to rely on US dollar in the Chinese policy(1.0) it's a form of US dollar	132 133 134 135 136
038 AMP2:	i mean what's the purpose of your learning English to (1.5) you for you	137 138
039 AMP4:	er:: (1.0) for me?	139
040 AMP2:	yes	140
041 AMP4:	for me to get knowledge	141
042 AMP2:	for me i think it's one is to get knowledge another is for information (1.0) but you know that if you learning English in China you cannot communicate (1.0) you cannot(.) and the and the also you said you	142 143 144

	learn you should you learn knowledge but there is another way	145
	(pause 2.0)	146
043 AMP4:	i mean (1.0) er: like you said the Japan has its advance technology maybe to other countries it to learn from them(.)now China is comparing to Japan is to be weaker than Japan so I think in this perspective [we need to(.) learning English we can ]	147 148 149 150
044 AMP2:	[so maybe .hhh maybe to learn Japanese] ((laugh))	151
045 AMP1:	yes I agree with AMP4 because Japan and the South Korea they are also powerful(.)so sometime we can also learn Japanese language and South Korean lan[guage]	152 153 154
046 AMP2:	[this ] topic is on the use [of ]English not the use of Japanese	155 156
047 AMP1:	[yes]	157
048 AMP1:	yes so this topic the use of English should be given more emphasis is depend on the situation because nowadays you know so many you know Chinese students they cannot they cannot use English very appropriately so that's why it should give more attention to English language proficiency(.) so this is very important	158 159 160 161 162
049 AMP2:	but somet[ime ] sometimes you need to know advantages of:	163
050 AMP3:	[yes ] not for every people but I think the more emphasis should be given to those want to study (1.0) ah:: study overseas (1.0) let's discussion the second topic	164 165 166 167
051 AMP2:	yeah yeah	168
052 AMP3:	whether is better for Chinese students to pursue their postgraduate study overseas so AMGP1 what is your?	169 170
053 AMP4:	so Chi[na .hhh]	171
054 AMP1:	[actually] I think it depends because different people may have different situation they have we have different cases (.) so for some students they are it's better for them to have for the education overseas because they are appropriate to live outside(.) They can adapt the environment very appropriately they can they are they are they like to communicate with they like to communicate with the foreigners with westerners and for they I think its its very good(.) but for some other students I think it's because you know some students feel very they don't like to communicate with the other they em::(1.5) they are very introverted(.) and they cannot adapt environment very well very appropriate and sometimes it depends on their parents so much(.) when you go abroad you should be independent everything is up to you you need to do everything by yourself(.) so I don't think everybody should go overseas it depends	172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185
	(pause 1.5)	186
055 AMP2:	no this topic is not means everybody it is about whether it is better for Chinese students to pursue	187 188
056 AMP1:	postgraduate study overseas	189
057 AMP2:	yes postgraduate(1.0) this is not means everybody should go abroad	190
	(pause 1.0)	191
058 AMP1:	I think it's .hhh((point to AMP4))	192
059 AMP4:	I think it's [er:: (1.2)] I think it's a basic basic tool basic ability for	193



	student so (0.6) for learn English different people with different purpose (1.0)	194 195
060 AMP2:	[bad or not]	196
061 AMP4:	and for some people have win to study abroad learning English can help them a lot(.) but you can never know what happen in the future so such basic knowledge I think it will help one to prepare for the future	197 198 199 200
	(pause 2.0)	201
062 AMP1:	but I think this topic is not for us to discuss the purpose of learning English this is just ask us whether we would like to pursue postgraduate study	202 203 204
063 AMP2:	yes	205
064 AMP1:	so that whether it is better for us to have postgraduate overseas so it is another thing that whether is better for us to pursue our postgraduate study in China? so which one is better ((watching at AMP3)) you think go abroad is better or in China	206 207 208 209
065 AMP2:	you should know whether the education in China is better than go abroad	210 211
066 AMP1:	so AMP3 what is your opinion	212
067 AMP3:	er:(1.0) in my opinion I don't know whether is better for Chinese students but definitely is better for the overseas countries if Chinese students come to study in their country(.) they pay the tuition fee two times triple or double than the local student like Malaysian this one cannot be:	213 204 205 206 207
068 AMP1:	so for you as an individual do you think it's better for you?	208
069 AMP3:	also and what I mean is that they (1.0) better and benefit for the overseas country because for some excellent Chinese student after they finish their study they continue staying overseas country they contribute to this country(.) and so the country the overseas country got the talented people they got the money they got the everything(.) but China just lost the very excellent talented people like the the experts	209 210 211 212 213 214 215
070 AMP1:	I think is it's the (bringing) problem	216
071 AMP3:	yes	217
072 AMP1:	but for you do you think it's very good for you to go abroad you feel better?	218 219
073 AMP3:	for me I don't think so it's better for Chinese students pursue postgraduate studies overseas(.) <u>because</u> overall now Chinese education is increasing very fast and the level of university increase also very fast and then so maybe for (1.0) after some years it's no need to (1.0) for er:: no need for Chinese students to study overseas(.) you stay in China but at the same time you can still enjoying the same level education system(.) no matter it is in Chinese language (0.5) teaching in Chinese or teaching in English because now a lot of universities they set their branch in China	220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228
074 AMP1:	yes	229
075 AMP3:	they teach in English, they hire the professor from overseas and now the students can enjoy the same level education just at their home no need to go overseas	230 231 232

076 AMP1:	yes you know there is another reason why I go overseas to pursue my postgraduate study because in China I try to pursue my postgraduate study in China but it is very difficult for me to pass the examination I try two times for the Beijing University of foreign language but it's very difficult	233 234 235 236 237
	((all laugh 2.0))	238
077 AMP1:	so I think it's kind of torture for [me I try I try but I fail] the examination	239 240
078 AMP2:	[this is not the reason ]((laugh))	241
079 AMP1:	because you know the foreign foreign postgraduate study can give me a better chance to pursue my study and very easy to be admitted by that university. So I quit easy getting a chance, opportunity to pursue my postgraduate study so I come here (.) and I think there is another thing that whether another thing is very good that the overseas study very good because they have very broad entrance very narrow (1.0) er:: narrow	242 243 244 245 246 247 248
080 AMP2:	easy to entrance and difficult to (go)	249
081 AMP1:	easy to entrance the university very difficult to graduate(.)so I think this is very good because it's easy it's easy for you to enter university and you will try to study hard(.)You have a chance to enter this university and because it's very difficult for you to graduate you will pay great efforts to graduate(.) but in China, you know so many students after they enter the postgraduate university they don't work hard they have lose themselves they don't study so I think this is the reason why I would like to pursue my postgraduate study overseas	250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257
082 AMP2:	but I think it depends on whether you can learn more knowledge from	258
083 AMP1:	yes	259
084 AMP2:	I means maybe sometimes you choose to go abroad to continue your PHD or postgraduate studies maybe you learn not as much as in China(.) So maybe sometimes you find it you graduate you go back to China you still cannot find a job(1.0) [That's the problem]	260 261 262 263
085 AMP3:	[yes because the ] issue is still there if you cannot defect to the other competitors at the entrance exam how can you defect others in other opportunities for you to find a job thousands of people just sinking for one job opportunity how can you defeat the others	264 265 266 267 268
086 AMP1:	yes I think [this ]	269
087 AMP3:	[this] is also another form of examination	270
088 AMP1:	yes I know[that but .hhh ]	271
089 AMP2:	[also maybe ] maybe you know that even though you learn a lot of knowledge we still got problems(.) but sometimes you will find the this knowledge cannot use in China this is a problem	272 273 274
090 AMP3:	yes after you graduate you still intend to back to China right? that's why why you study English overseas	275 276
091 AMP2:	yes you can speak English every day but how can you do this in China ((laugh))	277 278
092 AMP1:	because you know talking about myself I would like to be the English language lecturer become professor in the future so my case my case is a little bit different from the others(.) so I learn I go abroad I try to	279 280 281

	enlarge my (raison) I want do develop myself comprehensively(.) I try to meet new friends I try to meet friends from all over the world this is also one reason I want to go abroad(1.0) but I think regarding to what AMP3 has mentioned that even though I get the foreign education I cannot even compete when I go back to China(.) but I don't think so it depends on individual different people have different situations some people when they go abroad you don't study hard they will be lose themselves(.) they have fun everyday but my situation different I try to work hard I not only study hard but also develop myself to become comprehensively(.) so think I can realize my dream	282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292
	(pause 2.0)	293
093 AMP4:	I think the problem is the:: let me .hhh	294
094 AMP2:	you know	295
095 AMP4:	((to AMP2)) let me finish my	296
096 AMP2:	you know the I think for most of the postgraduate study most of them are mix mode or coursework so I don't think it's good	297 298
097 AMP1:	so why are you go abroad?	299
098 AMP2:	because for me I need this postgraduate [certification]	300
099 AMP1:	[yes ] yes we also need (the certification)	301 302
100 AMP2:	but you know actually you should know if you are postgraduate student you should know how to do research	303 304
101 AMP1:	yes how to do research	305
102 AMP2:	but if you are coursework or mix mode you cannot do this	306
103 AMP1:	yes	307
104 AMP2:	so that's a problem even you graduate you cannot publish any paper in the journals in a famous er:: famous papers you cannot do this	308 309
105 AMP1:	because what you have mentioned I agree with what you have mentioned	310 311
106 AMP2:	<u>BUT</u> I think for the degree students it's good for them to go abroad(.) but for postgraduate if you do your research you do coursework or mix mode it's not better than in China	312 313 314
107 AMP1:	yes because the original purp[ose for the postgraduate ]	315
108 AMP2:	[because in most of the] postgraduate students they do the research work(.) but we do the coursework it's not so different from the degree education. It's the same just .hh	316 317 318
109 AMP1:	for Chinese for Chinese postgraduate education you really think that all the [all the they]	319 320
110 AMP2:	[but they ] do research <u>YES</u> they do the research	321
111 AMP1:	formally this format from format from the pattern they	322
112 AMP4:	maybe the research que[stion ]	323
113 AMP1:	[in the] real in the real situation they do[n't ]	324
114 AMP2:	[this] depends on your majo(r(.) if you are an engineering student you will do the you go to the lab and do the experiments just like(.) maybe you should know how to design something how to make something but if you just do the coursework you know you just know the theory how to design hehe: [that's problem]	325 326 327 328 329 330

115 AMP1:	[yes so AMP4 ]	331
116 AMP4:	er:: my question do you think every Chinese postgraduate student they do have enough capability to do the research?	332 333
117 AMP2:	not every but you should know most postgraduate students from overseas they are the research or not they are doing the coursework or mix mode but in China most students doing the research work	334 335 336
118 AMP4:	emm:::	337
119 AMP2:	I think for every the average is different	338
120 AMP4:	but still the Chinese education system still is criticized by the overseas countries. And more in Chinese education system is the good purpose does not mean is necessary to be a good education system	339 340 341 342
121 AMP2:	But you should know t[hat ]	343
122 AMP4:	[Just] like Xiang Yang said it's a popular phenomenon that the postgraduate students just hang over and have nothing to do then finally they playing they found others' articles and take it as done by themselves and publish	344 345 346 347
123 AMP2:	China in china you cannot do this	348
124 AMP4:	I know some cases	349
	(pause 1.0)	350
125 AMP2:	but in in in oversea you can also do this, there also the case especial cases (1.0) you [know ]	351 352
126 AMP4:	[so so ]so	353
127 AMP2:	I mean we should focus on the postgraduate study	354
128 AMP1:	yes	355
129 AMP2:	you should know what the difference between postgraduate and the degree students is(.) so if you doing a degree study I think it's OK you can go abroad because maybe you can learn more abroad than Chinese students	356 357 358 359
130 AMP4:	but we are also not forbid you to do in the research [beca]use I think the education postgraduate education system in western country or in Malaysia	360 361 362
131 AMP2:	[but ]	363
132 AMP4:	they divided people into groups like the mixed mode and the postgraduate and the research	364 365
133 AMP2:	yes I mean .hhh	366
134 AMP4:	if you have a capacity to do the research they are no problem you can apply to research code	367 368
135 AMP1:	yes I agree with AMP4. Because whether it is for research mode, mix mode or coursework it's up to you you can choose by yourself whether you want to be a researcher whether you want to do a coursework or the mix mode (.) so if you choose the research you can do research comprehensively you can learn how to do research if you like to do course[work ]	369 370 371 372 373 374
136 AMP4:	[but [in] my opinion: ]	375
137 AMP2:	[but you should ] you should think of this problem if you wanna find a job The HR maybe it's oh you are postgraduate student but you cannot do you cannot publish any paper, you cannot do research	376 377 378 379

138 AMP1:	but if you [if you ]	380
139 AMP2:	[do you] think that if you you will choose the postgraduate student or a degree student?	381 382
140 AMP3:	if you want to:	383
141 AMP1:	it depends on what kind of people you wa[nt ] [yes ]	384
142 AMP3:	[yes] yes [what] you want if you a professor yes postgraduate student who study overseas must do this(.) if for research yes if you [want] to find a job	385 386 387
143 AMP1 +AMP4:	[yes ]	388
144 AMP3:	then the postgraduate students study overseas take coursework is suitable for you ((laugh)).	389 390
145 AMP1:	yes I know that ((laugh))	391
146 AMP2:	yes I knew that I mean that if you are you are mix mode	392
147 AMP1:	yes.	393
148 AMP2:	if you are mix mode you also have a postgraduate degree postgraduate [(1.0) Master degree]	394 395
149 AMP1:	[master degree (0.5)Yes]	396
150 AMP2:	maybe you go back to China to find a job you will choose the local people not the student who go abroad	397 398
151 AMP1:	no you don't say that because my major is English language	399
152 AMP3:	yes if he will be a professor for professor this one must do things postgraduate [studies overseas] otherwise there won't be a different	400 401
153 AMP1:	[I know I know ] I know AMP3 say I know AMP3 he would like to be a very good Er:: you know worker in some company(.) so that's why he go abroad he want to learn some coursework he want to learn some practical knowledge ((AMP3 knock head)) in order for him to get the still when he go to some company(.) but my situation different I would like to be researcher scholars to be professor in the future(.) so that's why I choose mix mode to choose mix mode means that I not only learn some practical knowledge from some coursework I also know how to do research(.) so different people have different situation	402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411
154 AMP2:	but that's what you think	412
155 AMP1:	yes	413
156 AMP2:	if you [if you] graduate you [back] to China for a job you will know what's real	414 415
157 AMP1:	[ yes ] [ yes ]	416
158 AMP1:	what's the real situation	417
159 AMP2:	yes	418
160 AMP4:	I think is not not the system [right or not ]	419
161 AMP2:	[if you say you] are doing mix mode or you are doing coursework you will find it you don't have [enough knowledge]	420 421 422
162 AMP1:	[so that's why ]	423 424
163 AMP1:	so that's why right now preparing my publication	425
164 AMP4:	you say any problem if your problem your choice not the system's problem	426 427

165 AMP2:	so so they	428
166 AMP4:	if you choose you want to do the research	429
167 AMP1:	and do it yourself yes	430
168 AMP4:	yeah yeah you should choose the research program not the mix mode mix mode is OK not the coursework you know(.) and for me as a MBA student we er:: always complain that we need to learn more [(0.5) pra]ctical knowledge not to [do the] research or write the articles or subm[it the] proposal like 30 pages	431 432 433 434 435
169 AMP1:	[practical ] [yes ] [yeah]	436 437
170 AMP1:	yes	438
171 AMP4:	I think this is just a waste of time we [don't use academic] knowledge we need more knowledge like [how to communica]te how to apply [ (1.0) ] yes(.) what we learn to real [(0.6) working] places	439 440 441
172 AMP2:	[but do think you ] [You have no time ]	442 443
173 AMP1:	[apply knowledge]	444
174 AMP2:	[real situation ]	445
175 AMP2:	but do you think it can apply or not if you do you are doing your coursework	446 447
	(pause 1.5)	448
176 AMP4:	I think .hhh	449
177 AMP1:	time is too long ((laugh))	450
178 AMP4:	I think it's better lah if you doing research [I::I: think it's ] better rather choosing course	451 452
179 AMP2:	[but do you think]	453
180 AMP1:	ok we choose the second third topic so AMP3 what is your opinion regarding to the technology making people more alienated or more close to each other	454 455 456
181 AMP3:	of course close to each other people now we see we got the very fast airplane like the air bus A380 you can fly from Asia to Europe within 5 er:: 10 hours (.) maybe 8 hours	457 458 459
182 AMP1:	yes but what I had mentioned is making people more alienated people	460
183 AMP3:	oh I mean the mentally close or mentally animated but physically close so I mean the more alienated is means mentally animated because how we use the social, social we can do like QQ skype whatsapp some kinds of	461 462 463 464
184 AMP1:	but in my opinion in my opinion alienated this word is not physical is psychological terminology(.) when people feel alienated because they may not feel so close they feel very distance between one another psychologically(.) because in my opinion I think the technology (1.0) yes I agree with that making people more alienated so you know talking about facebook people in the nowadays society people like to use Facebook(.) but I think because of facebook and even because of the smart phone people don't have time to face to face communication with each other(.) When they hang around they even eat together when they gather together each one just click his or her mobile phone even do not have time to communication face to face together with each other I think this is kind of problem in nowadays	465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476

	society but I do think that technology is useful it depend on whether you can better use technology rather than the technology use us	477 478
	(pause 5.0)	479
185 AMP4:	I think the technology definitely provide the options for the people of nowadays(.) and if you are older people you have the options to use instituting the wring the letter and someone can keep read letter and how to say let you memorize the day of past	480 481 482 483
186 AMP1:	to save something	484
187 AMP4:	yes to save something, and save the day you have past also we can use the internet we can use the camera and the microphone so the internet can get the visual images of families and friends so I think it's good thing	485 486 487 488
188 AMP1:	yes how about you? ((to AMP2))	489
189 AMP2:	I think if the technology is used for the social networking it's not use for people to talk(.) Even though you want to use facebook you use the QQ just like the Wechat and other things to communicate with the others who are far from each other(.) so I think it depends whether technology you use is	490 491 492 493 494
189 AMP1:	appropriated	495
190 AMP2:	yes appropriated	496
191 AMP1:	because I think the technology can make people's life more convenient such as the high speed railway make our way convenient when they try to go from our hometown to my hometown from AMGP3's hometown wuxi from ( ) we can take Airasia it's very cheap for go abroad but I feel that you know the technology yes it depends on whether we can make it appropriate	497 498 499 500 501 502
192 AMP3:	if you are addicted to technology I think you addicted to Facebook you addicted to QQ you spend time on that that will make people more alienated (.) We cannot just addict Otherwise like say	503 504 505
193 AMP1:	yes sometimes self-control ability is very important	506
194 AMP3:	you addicted it you will spend time on it will make people alienated	507
195 AMP2:	but in the real world self-control will be more alienated	508
	((all laugh 5.0))	509
196 AMP1:	that's why I choose to communicate with the others I don't use facebook	510 511
197 AMP4:	right if the technology can provides some apps and how to say some tools to help people to communicate not the way you communicate(.) you know you can make an appointment by send the message or something give you a call but we still need the face to face communication in the real world	512 513 514 515 516
198 AMP1:	yes I think sometimes because of technology I will be talk to people know our situation, sometimes we use QQ we use Facebook or twitter(.) but we never you know nowadays we have the situation that nowadays very few people write letter A real real of the	517 518 519 520
199 AMP2:	you write letters?	521
200 AMP1:	real real a paper let[ters]to the others	522
201 AMP4:	[yes]	523
202 AMP1:	but these kinds of things will [( )technology] sometimes even so happy to see the letter from my good friends or family members	524 525

203 AMP2:	[its waste time] waste time ((hehe::))	526
204 AMP1:	I think this is very important thing in nowadays society people feel very you know very in different you know people can be very in different(.) they don't have the very close relationship between each other we are sitting together but we may [not have close relationship between one another but so I think] write a le[tter is very imp]ortant	527 528 529 530 531
205 AMP3:	[Writing letter is a waste of time, message also waste of time ] (1.0) [talking is also ]	532 533 534
206 AMP1:	also you know also you lose your hand writing skill(.) hand writing skill is very important	535 536
	((AMP2 & AMP3 laugh 1.5))	537
207 AMP2:	you know hand writing skill is not let you to write the letter you can write article and journal ((laugh))	538 539
208 AMP3:	yes	540
209 AMP1:	but I think this is our traditional skill, we should not challenge it even though in nowadays society globalize society we also need to challenge this kind of traditional skill in order to make our Chinese culture more magnificent	541 542 543 544
	(pause 1.0)	545
210 AMP2:	writing is not Chinese culture ((langh))	546
211 AMP1:	the hand writing you know ( ) we shouldn't lose our identity because of the western world(.)You know the software all the software all the internet skill is from the western world but we shouldn't lose our own identity shouldn't lose ourselves (1.5) so that's why we need to use the technology more comprehensively shouldn't let the technology use us	547 548 549 550 551 552
	(pause 3.0)	553
212 AMP2:	finish? (3.0) ok finish	554
213 AMP1:	ok let's finish our discussion I think we have talked very comprehensively regarding to these topics we show our opinions. So it's very good thank you	555 556 557
214 All:	thank you	558



## APPENDIX VII

### Mixed-group Discussion (MGD)

Turn	Message	Line
	(pause 5.0)	1
001 MFP5:	<u>shall</u> we (0.5) start?	2
002 MMP5:	[yes]	3
003 MFP6:	[ok ] topic one	4
004 MMP5:	one the use of English should be given more emphasis in the Chinese educational system do you agree? so M[FP5]	5 6
005 MFP5:	[ha? ] heh:(heh)	7
	(0.3)[ em:: ]	8
006 MMP5:	[what do] yo[u what do you think]	9
007 MFP5:	[yes of course ]English has become a very em: an important subject not Only in the school but also in the working fields coz later on the, when the Chinese are graduated when they are looking for a jobs, there is a lot of needs in working place or working market for English so that's why I think they should emphasis in the Chinese educational system of the use of English	10 11 12 13 14 15
008 MMP5:	so it is for a career purpose basically [or you want, (0.5) ] oh I see	16
009 MFP5:	[yeah for the future]	17
010 MMP5:	but do you think they still they emphasis enough?	18
011 MFP5:	I think they did. They did emphasis enough nowadays but it depends on how the teacher plan er::the class er:: how do the how the le[vel of] the students	19 20 21
012 MMP5:	[yes ]	22
013 MFP5:	MMP6?	23
014 MMP5:	so do you have any idea anything you thing haven't done enough in China about the emphasis English	24 25
015 MMP6:	so most of the school they teach English in Mandarin only but in my opinion I think the English should be taught in English so we can observe we can how to say learn the language much better	26 27 28
016 MMP5:	is English really necessary in China?	29
	(pause 1.0)	30
017 MFP5:	MFP6?	31
018 MFP6:	my turn er:: ok I :: I :: think' it's essential for us to speak English better bec: but I think the current education is English teachers only do grammar drill for to students and they almost cannot speak[ English] just come up some words even cannot speak a full sentence	32 33 34 35 36
019 MMP5:	[ °Yeah °]	37
020 MFP6:	so::	38
021 MMP5:	but I think actually in China English is not necessary when you want to look for or something not like Malaysia	39 40
022 MFP6:	yeah	41
023 MMP5:	a company is normally they don't ask for English only for translators [and I::]	42 43
024 MFP6:	[ °Yes °]	44

025 MMP5:	I can give you an example. In my brother in law's company there are a lot of translators and they have the engineer to talk with the foreigners from the foreign companies (.) but later on after maybe half a year one year those engineers they can you know slowly slowly can pick up English and already they can communicate with those foreign companies directly even their English is not fluent or something(.) so those translators they they are at actually out of position it [it's ]	45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52
026 MFP5:	[so::: ](0.5) you are actually, not against the idea of the English is important, English is st[rong ]	53 54
027 MMP5:	[in China] really I don't [think it's such important]	55 56
028 MFP6:	[yeah (1.0) ] I::I: [I think ]	57 58
029 MFP5:	[you are] saying they slowly pick up English [study so why don't]they just study [(0.3) already or they fluent]	59 60
030 MMP5:	[yeah I mean they ] (0.3) [yeah(0.2) unless unless you] are English major students, maybe that's ahh:: that's necessary for you to be profession in [English ]	61 62 63
031 MFP6:	[I:: I TH]INK I don't agree with [you I::] I understand you use the situation of Malaysia and the [China] as different for our kind of situation that in China is not necessary for every-	64 65 66 67
032 MMP5:	[ 'yeah ʔ [ye::s ]	68 69
033 MFP6:	-citizen to master English, but I think, I still think it is better to, for personal er: for individual to, ah:: to h[ave [English] ]	70 71
034 MFP5:	[must be::: ]	72
035 MMP5:	[why English]	73
036 MFP6:	because before we study En[glish] we need to learn it's w[ord] we need to know the [kno]wledge about word	74 75
037 MMP5:	[yes ] [yes] [yes]	76 77
038 MFP6:	but now we learn English is to understand ourselves better because we want to know the real polities [(0.2)] or the re[al co]untry of ourselves	78 79 80
039 MMP5:	[I see] [yes ]	81
040 MFP6:	so it is important because sometimes ah:: even so the English can't be translate into Chinese by professional [tran]slators but how do you know if you don't English how do you know the information is true or fault or it's fit information	82 83 84 85
041 MMP5:	[yes]	86
042 MMP5:	it is necessary to know what kind of information you are talking about	87 88
043 MFP5:	techno[logy sciences ]	89
044 MFP6:	[I mean polities] technologies any informa[tion] So English can expand [our er:: view ]	90 91
045 MMP5:	[I see] [yeah for sure] I agree with you if you can master	92 93

	English you will have how to say benefit for you there are a lot of how to say strength for [you ]but (0.3) yeah (0.6) but is it any thing you learn is better for you	94 95 96
046 MFP6:	[yeah]	97
047 MMP5:	unless is something but I the thing we are talking about is it necessary in China if you know English or you don't know English is there any difference I don't think there is a big difference unless you are English teacher	98 99 100 101
048 MFP6:	I think is trade it is kind of business becoming [more (1.0) yes it's true ]	102 103
049 MFP5:	[use English the world] is connecting and the media is English for co[mmunicate]	104 105
050 MFP6:	[ yeah hhh ]	106
051 MMP5:	yeah:: alright [so any] more idea? [er::: for this topic so shall we] move [on? ]	107 108
052 MFP5:	[so is it] [so this is for the(0.5)move on] [yeah] we [shall ] move on	109 110
053 MFP6:	[MMP6] anything [else yo]u want to:: supply ʔany °	111
054 MFP5:	[MF::P6?]	112
055 MMP6:	er::: in order to you know adapts to the technology it is necess[ary it is ne]cessary to follow the step of the world	113 114
056 MFP5:	[em hm::.]	115 116
057 MMP5:	yeah ok let's move on	117
	((all laugh 2.0))	118
058 MFP5:	ok let's move on	119
	(pause 1.5)	120
059 MMP5:	so the second topic discuss whether it is better for Chinese students to pursue postgraduate studies overseas(1.0)so first of all I think ourselves we [are Ch]inese postgraduates study oversea(.) so do you feel anything we are different from the student how we are different we are from the Chinese study in China yes	121 122 123 124 125
060 MFP5:	[yeah ]	126
	(pause 1.0)	127
061 MFP5:	yes yes or no?	128
062 MMP5:	how are we different (0.5) are we different?	129
	(pause 1.0)	130
063 MFP5:	of course we are differe[nt it depends on what kind of thing we] are different we are more independent for sure	131 132
064 MMP6:	[we have better oral speaking English ]	133
065 MMP5:	yes	134
066 MFP5:	but for whether it is better I think it depends it still depends on on er::: on the person(1.0)whether they like they adapt the life but oversea the study oversea or they like in home will feel better	135 136 137
	(pause 2.0)	138
067 MFP5:	M[MMP6]	139
068 MMP5:	[yes ]	140
069 MMP6:	for for the benefit purpose is fulfil we are better than the Chinese from China	141 142

070 MMP5:	why? why you say so	141
071 MFP5:	why do you say so? ((to MMP6))	142
072 MMP6:	because you know we how to say like our thesis follow the every step [for ] literature review(.) but for the Chinese student they only do the thesis in two week. we:::	143 144 145
073 MMP5:	[yes] for the Chinese student they only do the thesis [in two week we:: ]-	146 147
074 MFP5:	[yes we heard a lot]	148 149
075 MMP5:	-yes I know those are doing in second class universities or something we have our best university Qinghua and Beijing University I believe they have better [how to say higher standard (0.3) ] yes	150 151 152 153
076 MFP5:	[yes higher educational system]	154 155
077 MMP5:	so when we look we look at the best because we ourselves [we ]study in the how to say	156 157
078 MFP5:	[yes]	158
079 MFP5:	The be[st ]University in Malaysia it's good for us	159
080 MMP5:	[yes]	160
081 MMP5:	the second best university yeah, in Malaysia(.) so we should look at the best so when we compare ourselves to those students I saw some on TV they want so program looking for job I feel that they [are actua]lly better than us f[rom th]eir knowledge from their:: how to [say e]r:: yes yes	161 162 163 164 165
082 MFP5:	[Yes, yes.] (0.3) [yeah ] [yeah]	166 167 168
083 MFP6:	foundation of [knowledge is better than us ]	169
084 MMP5:	[the way [they talk. They give]us those bosses and ]	170
085 MFP5:	[yeah (0.2) it depends it depends on person]	171
086 MMP5:	also when you study outside you miss a lot of opportunities to learn about the social [environment]	172 173
087 MFP5:	[yeah (0.3) ] yes	174
088 MMP5:	for me personally I don't feel that I fit in China when I go back I will face a lot of problem	175 176
089 MFP6:	fo[r example]	177
090 MFP6:	[example ]	178
091 MMP5:	er::religion issues and the mostly about the religious issues(.) before I come to Malaysia I was totally a different person now I start to pack up to learn about my religion and I like to be a Musli[m (1.0) so::: ] [ yes ]	179 180 181 182
092 MFP6:	[yeah yeah:] (1.0). Even I am a free [think] er I am more or less I [am ] change since I came here	183 184 185
093 MMP5:	[I see]	186
094 MMP5:	yes yes so when you go back to China the environment is totally different you need to learn so other skills (1.0) like my friends now they already finish their study they work in a company sale things	187 188 189

	some electri[cal equip]ment every day for they do they just drink play with their [boss]es	190 191
095 MFP6:	[em:: ] [yes ]	192 193
096 MMP5:	and some from the government and then when they sign the bell, they sign a very big amount let's [say ]the thing, the thing is [10000] they will sign maybe 15000 something like that-	194 195 196
097 MFP5:	[em::] [clear ]	197 198
097 MMP5:	-then they split the bell split and exchange because the government will pay [the money]	199 200
098 MFP6:	[yeah yeah ] yeah	201
099 MMP5:	they put the government's money into their pocket anyway you need to learn things how to deal with those peopl[e ] yeah what we learn here is actually not wo[rking]	202 203 204
100 MFP6:	[so] [yes ]	205 206
101 MFP5:	yes	207
102 MMP5:	In China black actually [black is very] common(1.0) [yes]	208
103 MFP6:	[yes that's ] why I like [fore]igner they are very pure	209 210
104 MFP5:	you don't say that you don't say that it depends on the society because not really melted into their society yet we are just outsiders you are seeing things you observe it you say it's nice but when you are in there, you [don't .hhh feel just ] the thing will be different	211 212 213 214
105 MFP6:	[may[be ] maybe ]	215
106 MMP5:	[yes] (1.0) yes and this is why my er:: how to say my experience once you once you went out of your country and then come back again you will see many thing before you never see it nnd never think it is bad	216 217 218 219
107 MFP5:	but it always been different people differe[nt groups ]	220
108 MMP5:	[yeah yes ]	221
109 MFP6:	but I am sure here is the situation is much sim[ple than China]	222
110 MMP5:	[yeah yes yes] it's healthier	223 224
111 MFP6:	more healthy yes	225
112 MMP5:	yeah[ yeah ]	226
113 MFP5:	[ that's] because our group is simpler than that	227
114 MMP5:	I believe still the environment here much healthi[er than China much much better] yeah	228 229
115 MFP6:	[yeah yeah yeah I can't agree] with you more yeah	230 231
116 MFP5:	ok let's move on	232
117 MMP5:	yeah all right all right let's move on	233
118 MFP5:	ok next yeah.	234
119 MMP5:	yeah last topic is technology making people more I don't know how to read this word	235 236
120 MFP5:	(giggles)	237
121 MMP5:	alienated is it?	238

122 MFP5:	I:: I think so	239
123 MMP5:	yes all right so for me personally I total agree with this point	240
124 MFP5:	ah↑ ha↓	241
125 MMP5:	one good example like the most popular program in China calls QQ	242
126 ALL:	<u>YES</u>	243
127 MMP5:	yes every time you see your family online you will feel that he always there	244 245
128 MFP5:	ah::	246
129 MMP5:	so::	247
130 MFP5:	so you don't have to talk to them.	248
131 MMP5:	yeah so actually after you have the thing you maybe 2 or [3 years you don't even] say a 'hi'	249 250
132 MFP6:	[yeah yeah::Yeah ]	251 252
133 MFP5:	em::	253
134 MMP5:	because they always been there you feel that he's beside but he is not and you don't know anything about him	254 255
135 MFP5:	yeah	256
136 MMP5:	yeah	257
137 MFP5:	yeah I agree	258
138 MMP5:	and make people far away from each other I feel that because it's like you don't care even because you have the chance to talk to him and he has the chance to talk to you but both of you didn't do anything	259 260 261 262
139 MFP5:	yeah::	263
140 MMP5:	so it makes people far away from each other	264
141 MFP5:	what about what about the telephone? The the nowadays you know we are using smart phones every time our friends are gathering everybody look [down] busy texting, online surfing	265 266 267
142 MMP5:	[yeah ] yes	268 269
143 MMP6:	take the	270
144 MMP5:	everyone has their own bu[siness yeah ]	271
145 MFP5:	[you but you] cannot just aba[ndon] it you still need it	272 273
146 MMP5:	[yeah]	274
147 MFP5 +MFP6:	YES	275
148 MMP5:	amm::how to say we live in this unreleased world something like that	276 277
	(pause 3.0)	278
149 MMP5:	it's like I still remember how to say the big bang theory ((laugh))	279
150 MFP5:	ah::	280
151 MFP6:	owh:: my favorite TV show	281
152 MMP5:	yeah shandon said I have 258 friends on my spaces	282
153 MFP5:	owh::	283
154 MMP5:	yes but you never [but .hhh ]	284
155 MFP5:	[never met them]	285
156 MMP5:	yes you never met any of them that's the beauty of it	286

157 MFP6:	hehe:::	287
158 MFP5:	yeah that's the beauty of it	288
159 MMP5:	sounds like you have a lot of friend you have a lot of so[cialization but actually you] are doing nothing you have I am not sure you will have chat with them	289 290 291
160 MFP5:	[you have to see distances]	292 293
161 MMP6:	totally true	294
162 MFP5:	true why↑?	295
163 MMP6:	not ready for the reasons	296
164 MFP5:	hehe:: MFP6?	297
165 MFP6:	I prefer talking in enjoy I::I enjoying face to face communication Even so I have facebook but I don't like to er:: check other people's information I prefer to enjoy my life I don't care what other people's life is like but I think I don't like it	298 299 300 301
166 MMP5:	living in your small world hehe:::	302
167 MFP5:	don't like facebook?	303
168 MFP6:	not small world I prefer I don't like to socialize on [social networking I prefer] just like us [face] to face talking I can .hhh	304 305
169 MAP5:	[ah social [netwo]rking] [ah:::]	306 307
170 MMP5:	[I see ]	308
171 MFP6:	face talkin[g I can]	309
172 MMP5:	[someti]mes what we say now the popular expression to kills some time time is to killed	310 311
173 MFP5:	yeah	312
174 MMP5:	just to see something you got something to do	313
175 MFP5:	yes	314
	(pause 2.0)	315
176 MFP5:	even though it's very boring thing	316
177 MMP5:	yeah	317
178 MFP5:	so	318
179 MMP5:	maybe you don't even enjoy it	319
	(pause 1.5)	320
180 MFP5:	so are we get a::	321
181 MMP5:	so any more ideas?	322
182 MFP6:	emm:::no	323
183 MMP5:	so can we stop he[re? ] very nice to have [you here ]	324
184 MFP5:	[yes] [yes hehe:::]	325
185 MFP6:	ah:: yeah very nice talking	326
186 MMP5:	yeah ok we make nice time byebye	327
187 MFP5 +MFP6:	bye bye	328
	(All laugh 3.0)	329